

SIGHT AND SOUND

WINTER 1965/66 * 4/6 1\$



NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

January 1966

Become a member of the British Film Institute and see these programmes

**SATYAJIT
RAY**

*Apu Trilogy/Devi
The Postmaster
Samapti/Monihara
Abhijan*

From the poetic grace of the Apu trilogy to Ray's most 'commercial' film, ABHIJAN, which was presented at a recent London Film Festival. MONIHARA, the third story in what was eventually released as a two-story film, has never before been seen in this country.

**JOSEF
VON
STERNBERG**

*Blonde Venus
Scarlet Empress
Macao/Anatahan
I, Claudius*

The Sternberg season continues with all the famous Dietrich vehicles, as well as his last two films, MACAO and THE SAGA OF ANATAHAN. It will be crowned by a hypnotically revealing BBC/TV documentary about the unfinished I, CLAUDIUS, entitled THE EPIC THAT NEVER WAS.

**GARLAND
and ROONEY**

Or Judy and Mickey, for there is still time to catch up with one of their most popular early films, BABES ON BROADWAY, in the current Busby Berkeley season. Also booked: ZIEGFELD GIRL, FOR ME AND MY GAL, EVERYBODY'S CHEERING.

STOP PRESS

. . . . A Preminger week a Loren week

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and prospectus
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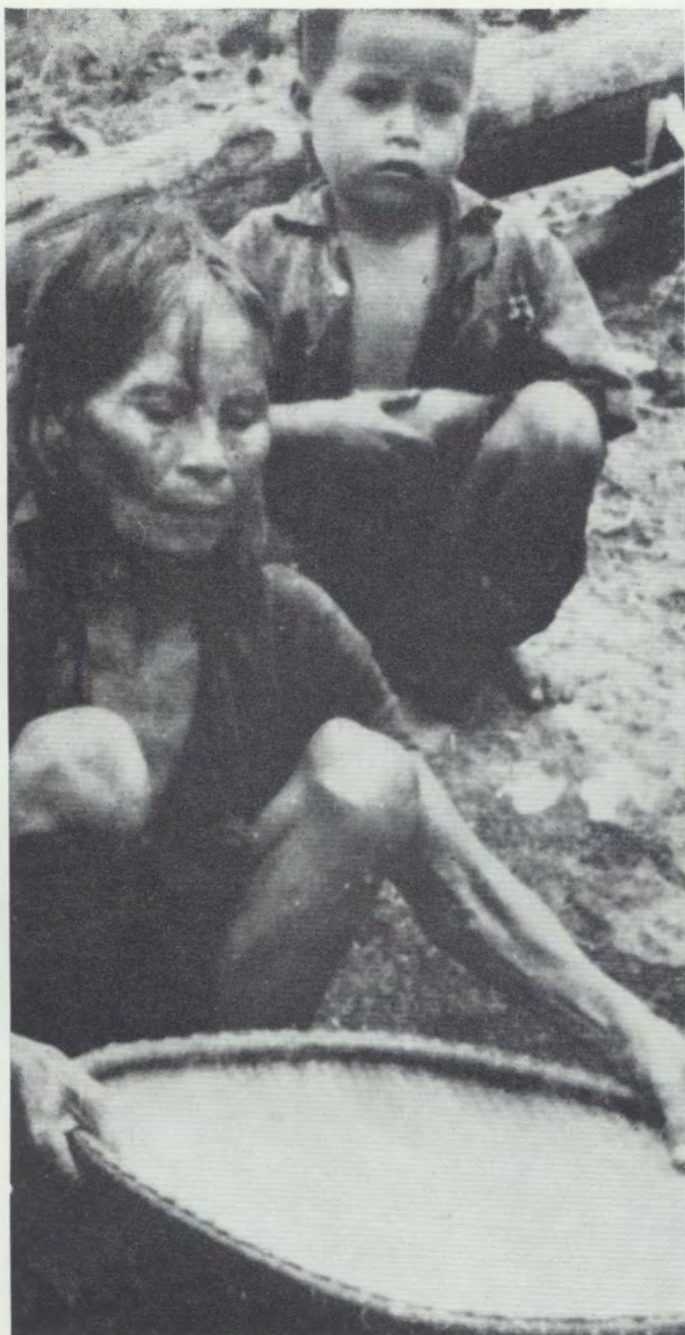
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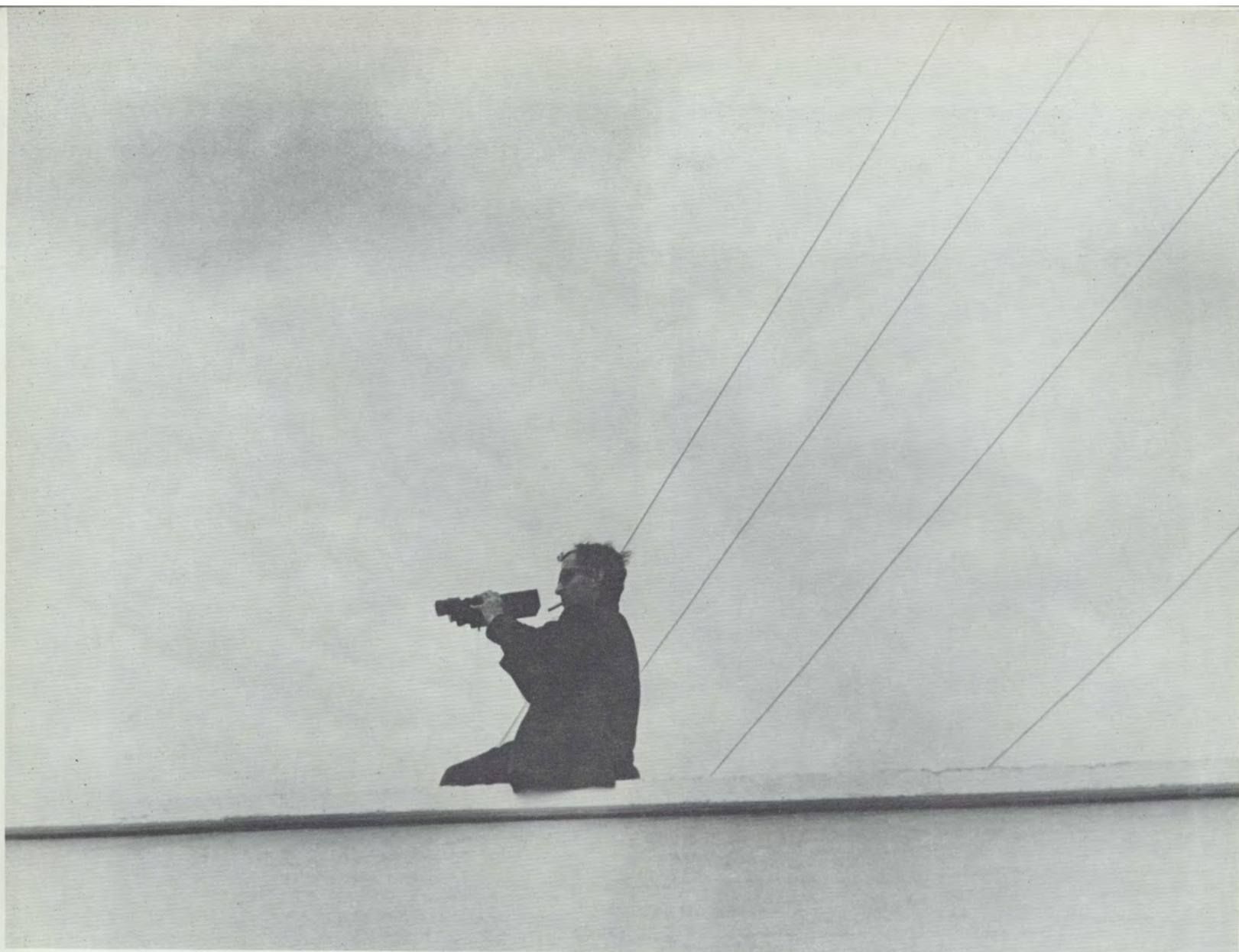
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The British Film Institute Award, 1965

The British Film Institute's Annual Award, the Sutherland Trophy, goes to the maker of "the most original and imaginative film introduced by the National Film Theatre during the year." The 1965 Award has been made to Jean-Luc Godard for *Pierrot le Fou*, first shown during the 1965 London Festival.

Godard could well have received this Award any time during the last three years, but *Pierrot le Fou* opens new directions even in his dazzling and controversial career.

Coupled with the main award is a special mention to Buster Keaton, whose rediscovered *Seven Chances*, and new films *The Railrodder* and *Film*, have brightened the year. Keaton's star shines undimmed; and the National Film Theatre, which in its early days first showed *The General* and *The Navigator* to small but devoted audiences, now knows that a Keaton film means packed houses and wild enthusiasm. We take some pride in this, but the credit is all Keaton's: and this Award goes to Buster because he is there.



SIGHT^{AND}SOUND

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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DAVID WARNER IN KAREL REISZ' **A Suitable Case for Treatment**



FRONT PAGE

JANUARY, 1965—Year opens in style with Kozintsev's sturdy political *Hamlet*, Franju's atmospheric *Thérèse*—and of course *My Fair Lady*, still not out at the end of '65. N.F.T. returns from exile to its home amid the scaffolding of the South Bank. National Film Finance Corporation and Rank sign agreement to back independents to the tune of one million pounds. Legal tangle between Fox and Anglo Amalgamated over the latter's chirpy poster for *Carry On Cleo*: Fox says plagiarism; Anglo says parody. Death of Jeanette MacDonald, most evocatively Thirtyish of singing stars.

FEBRUARY—Extraordinary legal action in the French courts, with exhibitors claiming (but not getting) £7,500,000 damages from TV, on the grounds that its showing of old films is unfair competition. Luckless British Lion announce big production programme, headed by *Modesty Blaise* (which they later lose to Fox) and including *Young and Sensitive* (Dartmoor prisoner's novel which turns out to be plagiarised). Flat month for films, with Peter O'Toole taking a critical drubbing for his suffering *Lord Jim*. Death of an immortal: Stan Laurel.

MARCH—Academy Two opens with *The Red Desert*, the film everyone insists that no one else can understand. Harry Saltzman uncorks his anti-Bond formula, *The Ipcress File*, which to no one's surprise looks remarkably like Bond Mark Two. Film Producers Association trying to get films on to British airlines; L.C.C. trying to stop smoking in cinemas; A.C.T.T. backing awards for quality films. *The Tokyo Story* finally makes it to a London cinema—the first Ozu film to do so. Death of Mae Murray, Stroheim's Merry Widow, and of Margaret Dumont, indomitable heroine of so many appalling encounters.

APRIL—Terrible press for Bergman's *Now About These Women*; mixed one for Teshigahara's *Woman of the Dunes*; surprisingly good for *Une Femme Mariée*, with only stalwarts of the anti-Godard army maintaining pockets of resistance. Months later the Married Woman has outstayed the other ladies—though in dire double harness with a nudist movie. *My Fair Lady* and *Mary Poppins* head Oscar share-out. In *Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte*, Bette Davis, Mary Astor and Agnes Moorehead give remarkable joint display of how to steal a movie without really trying. International film marketing organisation sets up shop in Brussels, the Common Market H.Q. Death of Linda Darnell, quintessential Forties star, and of veteran cameraman Georges Périnal.

MAY—Britain's year at Cannes, with Dick Lester's *The Knack* winning our first Grand Prix since *The Third Man*. Competition isn't strong, but Lester's genial brand of pop art (here and in *Help!*) is out on its own in 1965 trend-setting. Jeanne Moreau, the magnificent and inescapable, faces the firing squad in *Mata Hari*. To thunders of press support (Tynan, Anderson, et al.), National Film Theatre puts on revelatory week of Czech films.

JUNE—Moreau rides again in Demy's *Baie des Anges*, the treat of the year for anyone with a pocket roulette wheel—and many without. Peckinpah's *Major Dundee* turns out to be the film that didn't need all the advance apologies: cut but not diminished. Bresson's *Dames du Bois de Boulogne* comes to Academy Club, and makes the *Daily Worker* surprisingly cross: "the fact that the script is by Jean Cocteau is neither here nor there." Death of Judy Holliday, forever memorable as the dumb blonde who couldn't hide her intelligence, and of David O. Selznick, almost the last tycoon.

JULY—Rank opens world's first automated cinema in Nottingham: a double-decker with push-button controls switched on

for *The Sound of Music* and *Mary Poppins*. Dilys Powell, on seeing *The Disorderly Orderly*, announces her membership of the Jerry Lewis fan club. Mai Zetterling glumly out-Bergmans Bergman with *Loving Couples*; and *Joseph Kilian* is the Kafka film that isn't based on Kafka. Contract signed for nation-wide Soviet release of *Carry On Nurse*. Lord Harlech, former British ambassador in Washington (as David Ormsby-Gore) becomes new head of B.B.F.C.

AUGUST—Showmanlike change of front by Mike Todd Jr., who declares that his Smellovision process has been "almost instantaneously rejected by the public." Smellovision's *Scent of Mystery*, deodorised, to be released as *Holiday in Spain*. Jennie Lee announces setting up of committee to advise on a British National Film School. *The Observer*, cult-conscious as ever, fails to review *Cat Ballou*, hastily discovers it a week later as the cult film of the year. Buñuel's *Diary of a Chambermaid* (Moreau again), stands up to comparisons with Renoir; Pierre Etaix's engaging *Yoyo* more than survives comparisons with Tati.

SEPTEMBER—Venice Festival, under extraordinary critical fire for 'intellectualism', gives Grand Prix to Visconti. Commonwealth Festival in London: no intellectualism; no prizes. Anglo-French co-production Treaty signed after long negotiation, bringing Britain one step closer to that other Common Market of European cinema. T.U.C. revives tottering war-horse, by supporting Equity's move to resuscitate the question of a third circuit. The engaging *Peter and Pavla* at the Academy; the unengaging *Darling* seemingly everywhere; and Burton and Taylor locked in artistic amours in *The Sandpiper*, the year's most improbable conversation-piece. Lord Goodman, already head of the Arts Council, announced as new chairman of British Lion. Death of Clara Bow, 'It Girl' of a forgotten age.

OCTOBER—G.L.C. announce their new film censorship regulations for London, recognising that the scope of censorship "should be restricted to preventing those kinds of harm which the law seeks to prevent in relation to the printed and spoken word." The arts, they point out, "are sometimes intended to be disturbing." Wyler's *The Collector* arrives with the year's most alluring slogan ("almost a love story . . ."); but drops it for something more saleable. Ray's *Charulata* and Visconti's *Of a Thousand Delights* prove predictably rich; Ichikawa's *Tokyo Olympiad* less expectedly so. Signoret, Leigh and Werner somehow keep *Ship of Fools* afloat.

NOVEMBER—PEP report on public patronage of the arts calls the cinema one of the Cinderellas; advocates art-house subsidy in the provinces. Godard and *Gertrud* (see next page) dominate a stirring London Festival. Dilys Powell, on seeing *The Family Jewels*, announces resignation from the Jerry Lewis fan club. *Lotna*, yet another of the year's late arrivals, confirms Wajda as the master of modern baroque. As we go to press, there seems no doubt about the style for British cinema, 1966: science fiction, with Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* and Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* among those standing by for blast-off.

TOP FOUR: *The Red Desert*, *Une Femme Mariée*, *Baie des Anges*, *Charulata*.

NEXT BEST: *Thérèse*, *Now About These Women*, *Woman of the Dunes*, *Major Dundee*, *Diary of a Chambermaid*, *Peter and Pavla*, *Tokyo Olympiad*, *Of a Thousand Delights*. **LATECOMERS:** *Tokyo Story*, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*. **LONDON FESTIVAL:** *Gertrud*, *Alphaville*, *Pierrot le Fou*, *I Pugnì in Tasca*.

London Festival Chart

Festival round-up by a group of SIGHT AND SOUND writers. We have published articles already on some of the major films; and others will be reviewed when they open in London.

★★★★ TO ★ INDICATE CRITICS' RATINGS ● INDICATES ANTIPATHY	BRENDA DAVIES	JOHN GILLETT	PENELOPE HOUSTON	GILLES JACOB	TOM MILNE	DAVID ROBINSON	JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR	ROBERT VAS
Alphaville (Jean-Luc Godard)		★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	●
Ascent (Tapan Sinha)					★			
A Blonde in Love (Milos Forman)	★★★	★★★	★★★		★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
Caressed (Laurence L. Kent)		★			★★			★
La Chasse au Lion à l'Arc (Rouch)		★★			★★	★	★★	★★
Dear John (Lars Magnus Lindgren)	★★★	★★★		★★	★★★	★	★	★★
The Enchanted Desna (Solntseva)		★★	★	★★			★★★★	
Gertrud (Carl Theodor Dreyer)	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
Harvey Middleman, Fireman (Ernest Pintoff)	★★	★★	★		★★★		●	★★
Jose Torres (Teshigahara)	★	★	★		★	★		★★
Kapurush	★★★	★★	★★★		★★★	★★	★	★★★
and Mahapurush (Satyajit Ray)	★★	★★★	★★		★★	★★	★★	★★
Lady in a Cage (Walter Grauman)		★		●	●		★★★★	
A Manuscript Found in Saragossa (Wojciech Has)		★★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★	●	
Mickey One (Arthur Penn)	★★	●	●		★★		★	★★
The Moment of Truth (Rosi)	★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★	★★	★★
Le Mystère Koumiko (Chris Marker)	●	★★	★★	★	★		★	★★★
L'Or du Duc (Jacques Baratier)		★		★	●		●	
Paris vu par (Claude Chabrol)	★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★★★	★
(Jean Douchet)	★	★	★	★★	●	★	★★★★	★
(Jean-Luc Godard)	★	★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★
(Jean-Daniel Pollet)	★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★★	★
(Eric Rohmer)	●	★	★	★★	●	★	★	★
(Jean Rouch)	★	★★	★★★	★★	★	★	★★★★	★★
Pierrot le Fou (Godard)	●	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★	
I Pugni in Tasca (Marco Bellocchio)	★★	★★★	★★★★		★★★★		★★★★	★★★
Red Beard (Akira Kurosawa)	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★		★★★	★★★★
Shakespeare Wallah (James Ivory)	★★★	★★★	★★		★	★★	★★★	★★
Thomas l'Imposteur (Franju)	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
Unreconciled (Jean-Marie Straub)		●	●		●		★★★★	★
Walkover (Jerzy Skolimowski)		★	★	★★	●	★★	●	★

NEITHER A FESTIVAL nor a year for those train-spotters of criticism who enjoy marking down trends and waves. Plenty of zooms, freezes, and hand-held cameras; some cinéma vérité (Teshigahara's *Jose Torres*, some of *Paris vu par*). But the big successes were the most unassailably individual films: Dreyer's *Gertrud*, emotion recollected in tranquillity with devastating lucidity; Godard's double, *Alphaville* and *Pierrot le Fou* (Godard isn't only controversial; he's also incredibly industrious); and *I Pugni in Tasca*, a first film bearing the unmistakable signs of a strong new talent with something new to say. Ray, Franju, Rosi, Kurosawa: these, again, are directors who cannot be tied to a year, a fashion, or a trend. Nor can Keaton, whose *Seven Chances*, shown in the incomplete version which is all that survives (and for that reason not included in the chart on the facing page), was for some the event of the festival.

SIGHT AND SOUND has already published articles on *Alphaville* and *Gertrud*. Here Michael Kustow and Tom Milne write about the two films which, to us, rocketed the festival into excitement; and Robert Vas reviews the shorts and documentaries.

I PUGNI IN TASCA

INITIATION RITES, *rites de passage*, the ceremonies and acts which mark the passing of an adolescent into manhood, play a very important role in primitive societies. Our civilisation lacks such rites, which is why so many of our psychic and social ills come to crisis-point in late adolescence. Marco Bellocchio's *I Pugni in Tasca* (*Fists in the Pocket*) examines the way in which an adolescent tries to insert himself into our world. The fact that this adolescent is an epileptic, the fact that his family is isolated and intensely inbred, the fact that his self-assertion takes the violent form of murder—all these in Bellocchio's film become, not the extraordinary circumstances of an unusual case-history, but the necessary heightening of art.

In a villa outside an Italian provincial town a family of three boys and a girl live with their mother. The eldest son Augusto comes back home one evening, and in a dinner-table sequence we are introduced to the rest of this family, deftly but not over-emphatically, through their characteristic gestures. Sandro, the adolescent son, leans back in his chair, moves his hand obsessively over the edge of a sideboard, inches his fingers along the table: portents of epilepsy. Leone is handed his coffee in a saucer: he is dulled, catatonic. The cat eats from the mother's plate undisturbed: mother is blind. Sandro's horseplay with his sister's legs under the table is both rough and affectionate: their relationship verges on incest. So this infernal machine of a family is revealed, through performances which capture the very rhythm of emotional claustrophobia. There are glimpses of normal adolescent self-absorption (the sister kissing her own reflection in the mirror of the locked bathroom); and disturbing insights into the epileptic curse of this family—Sandro mimicking suicide on his bed, elated by a record, Leone having a seizure and dragging off the table-cloth while his brother and sister laugh.

At the centre of this family is Sandro, the adolescent throbbing and shaken by epileptic energy (Lou Castel carves an electric shape in the air): he wants to play a man's part like his elder brother, who has a purchase on the outside world, friends, a job, a fiancée. As he prowls about this cluttered, stuffy house, there is a touch of Hamlet about Sandro. A cruel Hamlet-wit appears when, his blind mother having asked him to read her the headlines, he discards the newspaper and invents headlines about matricides and the uselessness of the old. And, again like Hamlet, Sandro takes the burdens of the household upon himself. He asks Augusto to help him get a driving licence, so that he can relieve his brother of his chore of driving the family to the cemetery. Then he makes his offer—an offer which, in his eyes, initiates him as an adult: 'I want you to be free, Augusto. Imagine your life without the four of us. On the way to the cemetery, I'll drive us all over the

FESTIVALS 65

LONDON



LOU CASTEL IN "I PUGNI IN TASCA".



"I PUGNI IN TASCA": PAOLA PITAGORA.

precipice.' But he doesn't, his attention diverted by the fascination of overtaking another car. And again we think of Hamlet: 'And enterprises of great pith and moment/With this regard their currents turn awry/And lose the name of action.'

Sandro cannot get on to the world's wavelength. Two short sequences show us his separateness: he drives through the town market, shouting 'Raus' to a group of shoppers perceived through a windscreen silently, and he climbs to the top of the belfry, from which he can see the whole town spread out beneath him. An invader cleaving a path, or a bird achieving a panoramic view, with no contact in either case: these are the only roles Sandro can play. The only personal relationship he has is an incestuous complicity with his sister Giulia; and strengthened by her admiration, he succeeds in pushing his mother over a precipice. His driving motive is now totalitarian: 'I must get rid of those who are useless and a nuisance.'

* * *

The funeral sequence is remarkable. Sandro and Giulia, surrounded by framed photographs of dusty ancestors, achieve a new understanding across their mother's coffin. They measure themselves against their elder brother. 'At least he has an ambition,' says Giulia; and this is sufficient to provoke a fit in Sandro, for his fate is to be overflowing with energy for which he can find no adequate goal. The family bids farewell to their mother, each bending to kiss her cold face, until the carved black lid comes down before the camera's steady gaze. And suddenly, in one of the film's most extraordinary passages, all the relics of the mother's old world are thrown out—furniture, magazines, flags. In a wild jump-cut sequence, Sandro and Giulia hurl these things off the terrace, and burn them. Sandro cavorts through the bonfire flames, and poor Leone is left to scavenge among the ashes.

But even this abandon is fragile, as Sandro finds when he is taken to a nightclub by his brother, and is afflicted by a kind of social paralysis. He just can't win, it seems: even the whore he buys tells him he's not such a good lover as his brother. His only way forward is to follow his impulse to clear the decks, as he began to do by killing his mother. He drowns Leone in his bath. But this murder backfires by causing his sister—now the only person he trusts—to collapse down the stairs and succumb to what looks like nervous paralysis.

Sandro briefly considers suffocating her, because she has

now become another nuisance; but he does not do so. At the end of the film, left alone with Giulia by his departing brother and fiancée, he is once more purposeless and alone. Giulia, now knowing his inner ruthlessness, fears him. When he enters her room, she shams sleep. He kisses her, goes into his room, puts a Verdi aria on the turn-table, lets it fill him, miming and dancing with frightening self-abandon, and is seized by the worst fit he's suffered. His screaming for Giulia, her inability or unwillingness to come to his aid, are counterpointed by the distilled cadence and soaring melody of Verdi's love duet, in a final sequence which has a complex and terrible effect. The music tugs you one way, his paroxysms another: you are left with an inescapable apprehension of the fragility of human life, strung between order and chaos.

It is almost impertinent to speak of the acting in this film. All these characters burst upon us with animal lack of inhibition, and their primitive, obsessional, immature gestures of epileptic elation—sketching impulsive lunges in the air with the hands before the mouth forms words, running and jumping like a caged beast in the open air, turning on the bathroom taps to their flooding fullest extent—bite into our brains like a primitive rite, interrogating all our ideas of civilisation, integration, maturity.

MICHAEL KUSTOW

PIERROT LE FOU

THE CIRCLES OF ALPHAVILLE are set in a straight line, because Lemmy Caution knows exactly who he is, what he is doing, where he is going; and in the end he triumphs over Alphaville, Capital of Pain, to win his love. But Pierrot, groping desperately to understand both life and himself, cannot find a path. "Suddenly I feel free," he exults, and while driving down a straight road, asserts his liberty by swinging the wheel to the right, only to land in the middle of an empty sea. Pierrot is trapped in circles within circles. Running away from his wife, he meets his former love, Marianne; but in escaping from his wife's efforts to better him socially and financially, he quarrels with Marianne over money and society; and his affair with her ends in disaster, as it had done five years previously.

After the carefully ordered disorder of *Une Femme Mariée* and *Alphaville*, *Pierrot le Fou* looks like a return to the arbitrary insouciance of *Une Femme est une Femme*, "juxtaposing things which didn't necessarily go together, a film which was gay and sad at the same time." When Marianne first meets Pierrot and takes him back to her apartment, for instance, as he lies in bed next morning and she happily gets the breakfast, a casual shot reveals a corpse lying in the next room with scissors embedded in its neck. "I'll explain," says Marianne, and their flight to the Riviera looks like one of joy as much as panic; but her explanation, heard on the soundtrack as a series of inconclusive fragments, explains nothing, and Pierrot's questions, tortured by doubt, echo through the film like a refrain. Where *Une Femme est une Femme* picked out isolated moments (a shot of Karina crying followed instantly by one of her laughing), in *Pierrot le Fou* the ambivalence runs through the whole film as a cry of anguish for a world in flux where one can no longer know. "You won't ever leave me?" Pierrot asks anxiously, "You're sure?" "Quite sure," answers Marianne, gazing straight into the camera but obliged to drop her eyes before its searching gaze; and Pierrot is never sure.

Appearing briefly in the party scene at the beginning, Sam Fuller gives his definition of cinema: "Like a battleground. Love, hate, action, violence, death: in one word, emotion." *Pierrot le Fou* ranges freely over the battlefield—robbery with violence, pastoral idylls, murder by scissors, tender reconciliation—and its unity is purely emotional, radiating from Pierrot's attempt to understand and define his relationship with Marianne. He oscillates between happiness and unhappiness, and there are two main lines in his story, quite distinct though criss-crossed, subdivided, imperceptibly merging towards the final image of eternity. A line of romance in the flight through France, the Garden of Eden on the Riviera, the troubadour tales of Guynemer and the nephew of William of Orange told by Pierrot and Marianne to the

tourists; and a line of despair in the world they escape from, the corpses which litter their path, the bitter parody of the war in Vietnam, the constant presence of betrayal.

The surface texture of the film is patterned by emotional associations. The aridity of Pierrot's relationship with his wife conjures up monochrome images at a society party where the guests chatter blandly in the jargon of television commercials; the absurdity of his marriage to a woman simply because she is rich ends in custard-pie comedy; his meeting with Marianne explodes in a burst of fireworks in the sky, and coloured lights flashing like meteors on the windscreen as he drives her away. The excitement of the flight to the Riviera brings thriller images of guns, cars, hold-ups, crashes; the tenderness of love brings verdant woods and a tranquil sea; and their quarrel evokes its parallel in a parody of the conflict in Vietnam. Wherever they go, Pierrot and Marianne are haunted by the aura of the world they live in, Vietnam echoing the atrocities of Algeria, through cinema, radio, newspaper headlines, conversation. Godard never forces the connections; all he does, in effect, is to point attention by reversing the perspective, making the background chorus of references seem foreground.

* * *

The theme of the film is stated in the opening quotation from Elie Faure on Velasquez ("After he was fifty, Velasquez no longer painted precise forms"), and later echoed by Pierrot himself: "Not to write about people's lives but about life itself, just life. What lies between people . . . space, sound, colour . . ." *Pierrot le Fou* is an attempt to expand the momentary contradictions of *Une Femme est une Femme* through a whole film, and to examine the spaces, sounds and colours which lie in between being "gay and sad at the same time." On their itinerary through France, Pierrot suddenly scents the smell of death in the landscape, and a moment later decides that he feels just the opposite. "Life may be sad, but it's always wonderful." And even at the end, when he paints his face blue, wraps a roll of dynamite sticks round his head, and sets a match to it, his despair is uncertain, moving from the sad to the wonderful as he fumbles unavailingly to extinguish the match. In the course of the film, Pierrot swings from despair to ecstasy and back again. This is easy; what isn't so easy is to know where one leaves off and the other begins. The only certainty Pierrot ever finds is when both he and Marianne are dead; the camera pans slowly over a calm, glittering sea as their voices quietly murmur, "It has been found again . . . eternity."

It is a conception of pure romanticism—the story of "le dernier couple romantique," as Godard himself puts it—and the most striking thing about the film, never obscured by its flighty pop art surface and characteristic jokes, is its lyrical tenderness, naked and unashamed and with none of the obliqueness with which it informs (always) the earlier films. Pierrot, like Gauguin in his flight to Tahiti, tries to find an untarnished world, and is doomed to failure. A spreading canker haunts the film with its signs: not only violence, indifference, brutality, war in Vietnam, torture in Algeria, death in Cuba, but also the enigmatic beauty of Marianne.

Pierrot looks on while Marianne, listening to a war communiqué from Vietnam, melts in tenderness (like Odile in *Bande à Part*, Charlotte in *Une Femme Mariée*), for the 115 anonymous dead: "Each one of them is a human being, and we don't know who they are . . ." Yet this impulsive concern remains purely theoretical, for Marianne never discovers who Pierrot is, any more than he, despite all his efforts, discovers who she is. Like the sad tale of love misled by an obsessive song told by the man whom Pierrot meets on the pier, it is a tragedy of missed connections. Pierrot sees himself as a man about to drive over a cliff at a hundred miles an hour; Marianne sees herself as a girl in love with a man about to drive over a cliff at a hundred miles an hour; but meanwhile they are driving in opposite directions. "You speak to me with words, and I look at you with emotions."

The real key to this film is the search for lost time, Pierrot's murmured "Marianne . . . Renoir" over shots of Marianne herself, and a Renoir painting of a girl. His quest is for the



"PIERROT LE FOU": BELMONDO, SAMUEL FULLER.

romance of almost forgotten, nostalgic memory: the still air and pastel colours of a summer afternoon, green trees and shady lawns, girls with candid eyes and rosy cheeks. Innocent happiness, captured for ever in a painting by Renoir, whose "... nudes and his roses declared to the men of this century, already deep in their task of destruction, the stability of the eternal balance of Nature" (Jean Renoir's words). Nature, brilliantly captured in Raoul Coutard's photography, which makes one look in new astonishment at light and colour textures, dominates one half of the film in the sea, forests and beaches of the Midi, the green paradise which Pierrot and Marianne try to create with the fox and the parrot, the fields and the river they cross to get there. Equally present, dominating the other half of the film, is man's "task of destruction," in the arid cities and roads, punctuated red with lights, signs, cars, blood, until Marianne's red dress employed as an instrument of torture wrenches a despairing cry of protest from Pierrot: "I don't want to see the blood . . . I don't want to see the blood."

There's a progression: the desperate clutch at romance in *Bande à Part*; the encroaching isolation in *Une Femme Mariée*; the anguish of *Alphaville*. And now *Pierrot le Fou* is a film of black despair clothed in all the colours of the rainbow as a last bastion against black despair. "*La vie est peut-être triste, mais elle est toujours belle.*" Renoir's Nature is eternal, and hope, like Arthur's last vision of Odile in *Bande à Part*, is the legendary Indian bird which never stops flying.

TOM MILNE

FESTIVAL SHORTS

IF SOMEONE EVER UNDERTAKES the task of writing the theory and history of the short film, those single-reelers with a single idea or crisp personal statement may perhaps be compared to what early slapstick comedies used to be to features. Concentrated fun, brilliance, clarity, immediacy; these are what make a good and truly *short* film such a delectable hors d'oeuvre before the main dish. And if this year's Festival shorts—perhaps a bit too arbitrarily selected?—seemed rather hesitant when wandering to more shaded and refined territories, the films built on single ideas at least provided a firm grounding.

Buster Keaton's ride in a hand-car across Canada in *The Railrodder* is as brilliant a thematic idea as the style of editing in Geoffrey Jones' *Trinidad and Tobago*, which turns a tourist tract into a hypnotic, intoxicating visual calypso. These are glossy, representative products; but if you are seen to be short

of money, you have to be doubly clever. *Enter Hamlet* is a three-minute joke by students of an American art school: a succession of wry, dry cartoons flashing up to each and every word of Hamlet's "To Be Or Not To Be" monologue, rhetorically spoken by Maurice Evans. The "Ay" ("there's the rub") is illustrated by a sailor shouting the word, and "Enterprises" ("of great pith and moment") becomes "ENTER" and "PRIZES" written on signboards at a fairground stall. Lincoln Diamant's *Screening Room* shatters another idol: a bubbly shot from a glossy soap commercial is repeatedly mis-projected in a private screening room, and while the projectionist re-laces the film, the director's voice fills in the time with an un-glossy story from his relevant experiences. With its single sequence repeated over and over again, and the rest just pitch-black celluloid, this must surely be one of the cheapest films ever made. Safe in harbour with its single idea, it swims along calmly and ends before the need comes to look for other waters.

The Polish *Without Title* is another in-joke: a hilarious animated skit on endless credit titles. Or take those bitter little animated anecdotes, *Portraits* (by Mirosław Kijowicz), *The Top* (Teru Murakami) and *The Fifth* (Pavao Stalter and Zlatko Grgic); they come on, blossom forth quickly, and then obediently give way to the Main Attraction after making their mark. Showing only Buster's back in Alan Schneider's *Film* can be a key to a concept as much as the tattooed designs of two sailors (animated) who climb off the chests of two sailors (real) sunbathing in *The Beach*. And perhaps most successful of all, János Vadasz' *Overture*, working on the single idea of a chicken's development from cells to its final glorious burst out to life, visually orchestrated to Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*. The egg-shell of a single splendid idea hatches out to reveal a limitless meaning.

But it is here, on the threshold of the universal, when something more durable and consistent is needed, that short film-makers tend to lose ground. Schneider's *Film* hesitates between the deeper meaning of the Beckett story and its outward means of expression. Looking at the aged hero only from behind as he removes all the remnants and witnesses of his life from his desolate room; the room itself; the silence all along the film—these become more a succession of isolated means than a password of style which would open the door to Beckett's world. Fortunately Keaton's personality, even from behind, gives the film a certain unity and depth, and carries it, ultimately successfully, from the particular to the general.

In a way this comes more effortlessly to Peter Smith and

Luciana Dalla Mura in *Knees Up, Mother Brown*. There is a fine, indefinable moment when what begins like a reportage about an old people's club in the East End turns into a Beckettian fantasy on the grotesque horror of old age. Does it come with the scene where the pensioners paint the heads of huge Huckleberry Hounds, or with the dressing-up party and performance? The fact is that at the end we are viewing the same film as at the beginning, but from a much higher, richer level.

The achievement of Chris Marker's *Le Mystère Koumiko* is that we see the nucleus of his film and its universal implications constantly together: particular and general, form and content, side by side and working towards each other as a unified whole. One watches with admiration and delight the way he blends in this single-handed cinema a tender, inquisitive portrait of a self-searching Japanese girl with the characteristic glimpses and flavours of contemporary Japan, the harsh confusions between old and new, and even the whirlwind of world affairs that surrounds her. He translates this chaos into moods of a sunset over Tokyo, or a morning's trip to work. He blends feeling with intellect, Japanese with French (and French *cinéaste* at that), into a unique, telling formula. In contrast, Hiroshi Teshigahara, who in *Woman of the Dunes* showed us a whole Sahara of the human condition reflected in a single grain of sand, becomes curiously earthbound in America with *Jose Torres*, a documentary impression of a boxer's physical and mental preparation for a title fight which he eventually wins. A rare phenomenon in a Japanese film: showing the face of exuberant victory instead of defeat.

We Insist, by Gianni Amico, is another interesting excursion to foreign territory: an Italian film on the destiny and suffering of Negroes, composed out of still photographs of Klan lynchings, freedom demonstrations, Negro children, and set to the voice of Abbey Lincoln's songs. The pictures carry a rough, elemental charge; the raw and refined, eternal and ethereal quality of the songs is a second dimension; and to these is added a Mediterranean directness, hardness, feeling for melodrama. In *With a Stout Heart, Sicily* (by Gianfranco Mingozzi), it is again the contrast of melodramatic moments—a mother identifying her son's dead body; the family surrounding the corpse with the men's eyes swearing revenge—frozen into still photographs, that makes this perhaps the most successful short of the whole Festival. A contrast of the overstatement in the pictures with a cool, uncompromising, factual commentary; each layer tells its own story about the brutal activities of the Mafia, and the social/political circumstances that made it possible, and together they create a passionate outburst subdued into a disciplined observation.

A substantial number of these films were shot on 16 mm. and eventually blown up to 35 mm. Perhaps in time it will be the narrow gauge, with its greater technical and financial freedom, that will be the real criterion of the artistic freedom hitherto attributed to the short film. *Paris vu par . . .* has six directors rambling the streets in the liberty of 16 mm., with Rouch's twenty-minute bravura episode shot in two (or is it one?) walking, turning, zooming takes. Films by Marker, Teshigahara, Anger, the magnificent entry from Iceland (*Birth of an Island*), and many other films were all conceived for the narrow gauge, and perhaps this aspect provides a more fitting way to group these films together than by their length. At a time when the short film is fading, 16 mm. helps to do what *A Propos de Nice*, *Rain* or *Land Without Bread* did in their time.

Is this fading of the short rooted in the fact that television provides a richer outlet? Or because in certain countries it isn't much more difficult to make a first feature than a short? But then, they go hand-in-hand: in France and Poland both features and shorts seem faint compared to five or six years ago. Also, the distinctions become less clear: short film-makers turn to features, and features become short-like with their single story-lines clinging to a key mood and avoiding decoration. The great ones—Buñuel, Bresson, Ray (with, in *Kapurush*, the same assurance of story-telling, character, mood, depth and feeling)—they can tell it shorter and shorter, more and more like chamber music.

ROBERT VAS

MARKER ON MARKER: A SHOT FROM "LE MYSTERE KOUMIKO".



LIGHT OF DAY

Raoul Coutard



"PIERROT LE FOU".

BEFORE GODARD, CAMERAMEN USED to demand an absurdly long time to set up the lights for a shot. The cameraman would insist on a good two hours to organise a straightforward horizontal pan. He could have moved five or six times faster; but he said to himself: The less I demand, the less I exist. In effect, and without him even being aware of it, the cameraman's performance had become a gigantic act. He turned down certain camera angles, certain movements of the actors, simply for the satisfaction of demonstrating his own existence. Films had become an accretion of elements which really had nothing to do with the cinema. They were the product of a collective circus, in which each technician put on his own star turn.

Godard didn't say to the cameraman: "You are going to handle the photography this way, that way, at an angle, against the light, etc." What he said to him in effect was: "I want only one thing from you. You must rediscover how to do things simply." People have been impressed by Godard and the rest because for them a film is a matter of cinema. Exclusively of cinema.

Now, it's obvious that from the moment when the cameraman agreed to return to simplicity, and stopped trying to be interesting, the general style of the film image was going to

change. Because, with the cameramen all determinedly tricking out their circus turns, the image had become pretty extravagant.

I had got a fair idea about this at the French Society of Photographers, in the Rue de Clichy. Before working in films I was a photographer; and at Rue de Clichy, at that time, the pupils in general followed two styles of photography. There were street scenes, photographs of their wives sitting by windows, off-the-cuff reportage, which the instructors thought were uninterestingly lit. Then there were the photographs where the lighting was artificial and gimmicky, and where one sensed immediately that the subject was no longer a bit of real life, but had been carefully posed amidst a network of lamps. This was the "Style Harcourt"; and the instructors at the school, who were much attached to this type of photography, called it, quite seriously and without any intention of being unkind, "cinema lighting." So it was: one could say that all films were lit like that.

But the photographs that work, the ones that can be looked at for any length of time with some kind of interest or emotion, are not only those of Cartier Bresson, but also the old-fashioned portraits taken by Petit and Nadar. They took these photographs in studios lit by one big window—by the light



"PIERROT LE FOU": CAR THEFT.

of day, by that really beautiful all-over light which is daylight. And a film cameraman ought never to let himself forget that the eye of the spectator is naturally tuned to full daylight. Daylight has an inhuman faculty for always being perfect, whatever the time of day. Daylight captures the real living texture of the face or the look of a man. And the man who looks is used to daylight.

* * *

The human eye penetrates to the depths of a room, then in a second it turns to a window; and it isn't disturbed by the transition. But the camera is disturbed—or, rather, the film stock is. To keep the natural beauty of real light on the screen, whatever movements Anna Karina and Belmondo may make around their room in *Pierrot le Fou*—that's the cameraman's job. That is what Godard was asking for when he said, in his usual hesitant way, "Monsieur, we are going to be simple." Godard himself isn't exactly simple. I wouldn't put it quite that way. I never know beforehand just what he wants, and that complicates matters. And what he wants is usually a whole lot of things at once. He wants to shoot without lights; he's thinking of a shot in a Lang film which he saw six months ago, and of the left half of a shot by Renoir . . . he's no longer sure which one, and he can't really explain any further, but really it wasn't at all bad. Then after having told me this, he sends me off the set, me and everyone else, while he thinks about the way he's going to do it. And when I come back, I find that it's no longer the same shot. And anyway he would rather like that very white light which lit up the end of a table in a shot (unhappily a very short shot) from a Griffith film, and he has always wondered whether perhaps that very white light didn't really come from the developing processes used in the Griffith laboratories, which must have

been quite different from any other . . . and so on, and so on. No, Godard isn't simple.

I remember one of the very few occasions on which we worked in a studio. It was for the long interior sequence, made up of long takes, in *Une Femme est une Femme*. The camera movements were to be so weird and so complicated that Godard had for once resigned himself to studio shooting.

Well, what is the point of a studio? How does it make the work easier? In a studio, for instance, one can lift up the wall at one's back, to make room for the camera and a lamp or two. I wanted to do just that. Godard told me: "No. We mustn't move the wall. When a husband watches his wife bringing in the joint she has burned, he can't move the wall to bawl her out from further away. He stays in his chair and looks from there."

Another advantage of the studio is that with extremely complicated scenes, of the kind we had in *Une Femme est Une Femme*, the set-builder can construct his set in such a fashion that the camera dolly can move more or less anywhere without too many problems for the cameraman. I told Godard: "Change the set, move those two posts further away from each other. I can't get through." His answer: "Out of the question. A young couple in a flat near the Porte Saint-Denis don't live in rooms with acres of space. I'm talking about that sort of young couple. You'll just have to manage."

The third justification for a studio, and the essential one: the catwalks up in the roof to which one attaches the lights. We were making *Une Femme est Une Femme* in colour, and of course colour film stock at that time was slow, so we had to have at least some light to be able to see anything. So I lit the scene, with the lamps placed on the gantries which overhung the set—the sequence with Anna Karina and Jean-Claude Brialy getting ready for bed. Godard sent me away, thought it over, called me back, told me a thousand or so new things, kept breaking off in the middle of sentences, referred to twenty films I hadn't seen. I straightened out a few things, and we began. After a few seconds, Godard stopped everything. He said to Anna: "What on earth's the matter with you? You don't go to bed like that at home."

He put himself in Anna's place. Then he said: "We're absolutely mad. We're trying to film Anna going to bed in her room and there's no ceiling. Anna has never slept in a room that hasn't got a ceiling." A ceiling, of course, is expensive. The producer asked Godard: "Will we see much of your ceiling in the film? Can't you possibly do without it?" "We won't see it," Godard said, "but if there isn't a ceiling Anna can't do the scene. We must have a ceiling."

So we had a ceiling. I had no more gantries, to light the room from; we couldn't move the walls about; the set was fixed; we couldn't have any lights. In fact, all the advantages of the studio had vanished, and in the end what we found ourselves left with was a real room, with all its problems. That is the last time that we went to the trouble and expense of a studio; because in the long run, in a real room, with someone like Godard, one has more of a free hand.

* * *

Godard is even more incisive when deciding matters of film stock and laboratory techniques. Here I am going to be technical: I haven't any choice. The stock and the laboratory are 80 per cent of the film image—its finesse and subtlety, its effect or lack of effect, its punch and emotion. These, however, are points of which the public is never aware.

People often tell me that *Lola* was brilliantly shot. "Was it due to your own mood?" they ask. "Or to Demy? Or the light of Nantes? Or the look of Anouk Aimée?" It was partly all of these things, but first and foremost, and above everything else, the images of *Lola* came from the film stock—Gevaert 36, which the factory has now stopped making. So I have never been able to recapture those unsaturated blacks, those extraordinary whites, that grainy texture of real and unreal which in my opinion accounted for at least seventy per cent of the lyricism of *Lola*.

Godard knows this. And when it's a question of film stock, he is no longer hesitant. That first time, on *A Bout de Souffle*, he said to me: "No more confectionery: we're going to shoot

in real light. You've been a photographer. Which stock do you prefer?" I told him I liked to work with Ilford H.P.S. Godard then had me take photographs on this stock. He compared them with others, and we made a number of tests. Finally he said: "That's exactly what I want."

We got on to the Ilford works in England, and they told us that they were very sorry, but their H.P.S. wasn't made for motion picture cameras, only for still photographs: we would have to give up. But Godard doesn't give up. For still camera spools, Ilford made the stock in reels of 17½ metres. The perforations weren't the same as for cinema cameras. Godard decided to stick together as many 17½ metre reels as he would need to make up a reel of motion picture film, and to use the camera whose sprocket holes corresponded most closely with those of the Leica—luckily, the Cameflex. The professionals were horrified.

But that wasn't the end of it. One photo-developer got particularly good results with H.P.S. stock, and that was Phenidone. With Godard and the chemist Dubois of the G.T.C. Laboratories, we ran several series of tests. We ended up by doubling the speed of the emulsion, which gave us a very good result. Godard asked the laboratory to use a Phenidone bath in developing the film. But the laboratory wouldn't play. The machines of the G.T.C. and L.T.C. laboratories handle 3,000 metres of film stock an hour, with everything going through the same developing process, and with the equipment geared to standard Kodak practice. A laboratory could not effectively take one machine out of the circuit to process film stock for M. Jean-Luc Godard, who at the very most would probably want no more than some 1,000 metres a day.

On *A Bout de Souffle*, however, we had a stroke of luck. Tucked away in a corner, the G.T.C. laboratories had a little supplementary machine, more or less out of service, which they used for running tests. They allowed us to borrow this little machine so that we could develop our stuck-together lengths of Ilford film in a solution of our own making, and at whatever rate we chose. There's one thing that ought to be understood: the fantastic success of *A Bout de Souffle*, and the turning point that this film marked in cinema history, was clearly due mainly to Godard's imagination, and especially (what to my mind is the film's major quality) to its sense of living in the moment. But it also had to do with the fact that Godard stuck together these 17½ metre lengths of Ilford stock, in the teeth of everyone's advice, and miraculously obtained the use of this machine at the G.T.C. laboratories.

After that, we were able to use this machine once more, on *Le Petit Soldat*. When we reappeared, however, like the flowers in the spring, to ask for it for *Les Carabiniers*, it wasn't there any more.

But *Les Carabiniers* was something else again. Godard said: "I have my scenario in my head. I know how to film the war, but to develop it I need a special developing bath. Why is there something so unsatisfactory about war films?" (There followed the stammered description of 45 shots or bits of shots, this shot and that one, which, when, where, etc . . .) "They are unsatisfactory because the greys are too soft. For *Les Carabiniers* I want the film processed in such a way that I get true whites and true blacks, and I want at the most three or four greys, sprinkled here and there.* Otherwise, we will be wasting our time and we won't be filming war." This time, Godard had somehow or other persuaded the laboratory to change its usual methods for him so long as our work lasted. We had permission to use a special processing method and a special developing schedule. And Godard got his four strong greys. But that was an exception.

Pierrot le Fou meant colour. A cameraman's worries over colour are growing steadily less, as the stocks become more flexible every year. But all the same: it's when he is working with colour film that the cameraman is most aware of the fact that no film stock is as sensitive as the human eye. The problem comes from the fact that any number of techniques and working practices were developed for work with early

*... here Coutard added Godard's untranslatable pun: "vous allez me faire un vrai bain de guerre, et un vrai temps de développement de guerre."



"PIERROT LE FOU": MEDITERRANEAN IDYLL

colour stock, such as Technicolor, which was not very flexible. And people have got stuck there.

Here I'll only mention the problem of make-up. Make-up is essential in a colour film, for a reason which is easy enough to understand. As the film stock is unstable, the laboratories need something to use as a fixed point from which to work in re-establishing the true colours; and what they work from are the actors' faces. (They also base their colour justification firstly on a range of greys which one films right after shooting the scene, and then after that on the faces of the actors.) All make-up men, however, have been trained in the American techniques which date back to the early days of Technicolor. They make up the actors very red, a practice which apparently was necessary for Technicolor. When the laboratory wants to correct this red, it will probably add some blue; and with someone like Godard, who has a passion for filming against white walls, everything goes to pieces if the walls turn blue.

This red make-up is a pointless habit. Amateur photographers know that they can get excellent results if they photograph their wives and children in Kodachrome without putting any make-up on them at all. On *Une Femme est Une Femme*, Godard asked for a neutral make-up, very light and clear. If there were moments when we had to add a bit of colour to correct one or two lighting effects, we decided to have a clear grey over it. We tried it out; and it worked. It's the same thing, however, as with the laboratories: make-up men have their habits, their normal working methods, and it is a crusade to get a more naturalistic kind of make-up out of them. Godard needed to say to them as well: "Gentlemen, keep it simple."

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Temples of the Seventh Art

NOTES ON CINEMA DESIGN
BY ERNEST CALLENBACH



Ernest Callenbach, editor of 'Film Quarterly', writes here as an American and draws mainly on American examples. But the question of what cinemas look like—and whether they look as good as they could—is also relevant here. Modernisation and re-equipment are widespread, but this is still an area of design in which there are few experts.

SPEAKING QUITE PERSONALLY, I think it is a bad thing that most of us who are deeply concerned with films have come to regard film theatres largely as necessary evils: ugly, uncomfortable, and noisome on the whole, often managed incompetently even as to elementary projection quality. We endure them because of the films, but I think few confirmed movie-goers positively *enjoy* them—and these, in my own experience, mostly enjoy what goes on in the theatres (I mean aside from the films) rather than the theatres themselves, as places. I know of only one theatre in the United States where people arrange to meet, before going to a movie, with any sense of real pleasure—and that is at the Museum of Modern Art, where the tickets admit one to the Museum (and its garden) as well as the show itself.

It has not always been so. But a conversation with an exhibitor has, for the past decade or so, been about the dreariest experience possible in the film world. Many are old men now, who came to power in the halcyon war years when "You just opened the doors and stood aside for the rush." Many of them panicked at television and turned their theatres into supermarkets. The more resourceful or tenacious streamlined their operations, cut back their overheads, stepped up their advertising, and hoped for the best. Some, pinched by the lack of films, experimented with an 'art policy': some of these made it, rather to their own surprise, and now operate comfortably profitable theatres; some failed, and turned to nudie-cuties, and grew rich. At the moment, a new wave of commercial optimism in the United States is encouraging the building even of ordinary neighbourhood houses. Drive-ins continue to proliferate; theatres change hands at high prices, and the number of substantial remodellings and renovations has been considerable. Moreover, theatres intended for movie and stage use are being constructed by the hundreds in universities and schools.

I find all this vaguely encouraging; it seems to me that a healthy industry is more likely to take the chances necessary for personal films than a poor and threatened one. But when you look into what has actually been going on in theatre architecture over the past decade, the feeling turns to dismay.

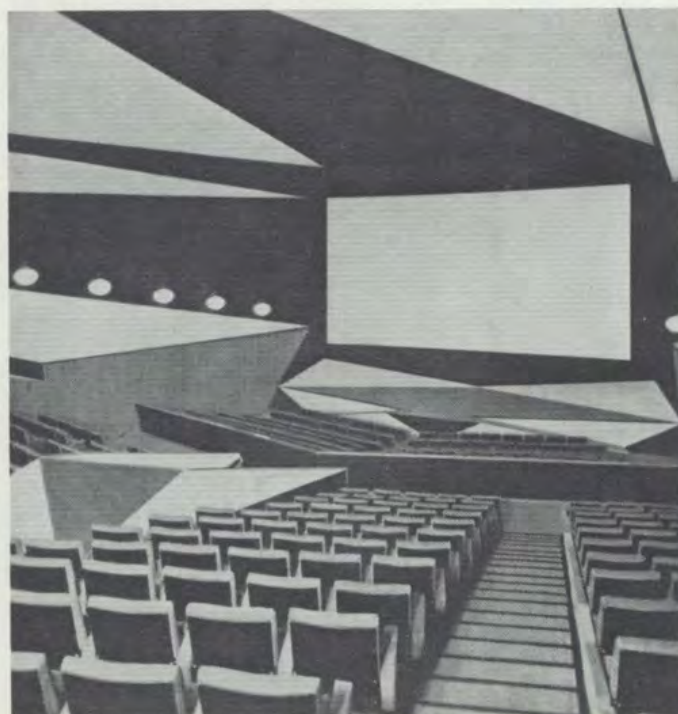
Now of course modern architecture and city planning are getting a very bad name these days. 'Urban renewal' has led to unprecedented social disruption, and I personally suspect that too many of our new buildings are frightening as well as ugly. I'm not sure what people would reach for when they hear the word 'architecture,' but what they think of must be something like the UN Building at best—some kind of high-rise steel-cage structure. Nobody, certainly, would think of a theatre, whether for stage or motion-picture use—though theatres have been chief ornaments of architecture from the Greek amphitheatre to the early years of this century. I want to suggest in this article that our contemporary neglect of theatres is both disastrous for the film and a key problem of contemporary architecture.

It has been obvious for a long time that rethinking is needed for stage theatres, and several recent structures have shown that this is indeed under way. The proscenium-arch stage is generally conceded to be a dying form, limited and rigid, with little to offer the modern drama. The focus of vivid theatre life today is on the various quasi-Elizabethan forms, the circle or arena stages—flexible stages utilising sketchy scenery and centering, as the ancient theatre did, on the actor.

Just after the turn of the century, the 'imaginary fourth wall', and the other three walls adorned with the devices of a fraudulent and puny 'realism', gave way instantly under the onslaught of the film—which could manage a hundred times better every realistic inanity Belasco ever contemplated. It has taken sixty years for the lesson to become clear; but the structures that will now be built for the university and community theatre groups attempting to keep the stage a living art will have multiple playing areas, many entrance and exit possibilities, and flexible relations of audience to players. They will offer, hence, immense possibilities to the ingenious architect, as for the ingenious stage designer and director. In the next decade or so, we may confidently expect to see a number of first-class buildings for the stage, and perhaps even a few that will be positively marvellous.

* * *

But what of the movie theatre? A careful survey of the architectural literature of the past ten years has led me to the reluctant conclusion that architects have fallen victim to a fundamental misunderstanding of what such a theatre is. They have forgotten that people do not come to a theatre either because they are already restful or serene, or because they want to become that way. *They come to be excited.* Despite McLuhan, the movies are a 'hot' medium. If people want calm, they stay home and watch television—a 'cool' or 'cold' medium. This premise is well understood by theatre managers: they know that their programmes must (in the trade term) 'draw.' It is perhaps somewhat mysterious that so many of them have been talked into buildings which do not



LEFT: FOYER OF THE FOX, SAN FRANCISCO. PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM HEICK. RIGHT: MODERN CINEMA IN LUGANO, WITH "WILDLY ANGLED PLANES STICKING OUT INTO THE AUDITORIUM."

draw; but wonderful is the power of fads—and the stripped-down or plastered-over style is at the moment the dominant fad.

It is worth remembering what theatre design was like in the days when bombastic showmen like William Fox were in control. One of the great works of the incredibly ornamented style they developed was the 'Fox' in San Francisco. (The genre as a whole may be conveniently studied in Ben Hall's affectionate but not campy book, *The Best Remaining Seats*.) This monument to the cunning of exhibitors had some 5,200 seats; today, an exhibitor of realistic ambitions wants 600 to 1,000, and often will settle for even less. The 'Fox' was vulgar, brazen, structurally dishonest—an ungainly steel cage encrusted with plaster and gilt, as showed clearly when it was demolished recently, amid much civic wailing and gnashing of teeth, to make way for a parking structure. But it was *interesting*, as a glance at the photographs here will show. It provided a glamorous entrance, a space to be in while awaiting a seat, or the end of the picture; its auditorium had variety, scale, and a certain grace. Hard as it may be to swallow, I submit that the 'Fox' had more *taste* than any of the new theatres illustrated in this article: it had power and it had coherent purpose, and hence it was worth looking at.

* * *

Now architects' assumptions about the relation of a theatre to the people who patronise it are subject to the grossest illusions. A study of the architectural journals reveals a curious and highly unrealistic syndrome. *Architectural Forum*, for instance, in describing a recent theatre, praised it for stripping away all detail from the auditorium, so that there could be no possible 'distraction' from the focus of attention (the screen). Presumably the spectator enters, sits down, and glues his eyes to the movie; as he leaves he glues them to the aisle.

This idea of the movie-going experience (whatever the design of the house) is of course ludicrously over-simplified. Spectators hover outside the theatre—checking stills, arguing among themselves about the merits of competing entertainments, looking at starting times, waiting to meet or be met. Once past the box-office, they may pause at the candy stand, or have a cigarette, or try to pick up a likely looking girl, or go to the toilet, or sit and wait for the break, or engage in conversations. Once inside the auditorium, they gossip, change their seats, and generally crane their necks around. Even during the picture itself, the spectator is seldom in the trance-like state traditionally ascribed to him by over-eager psychologists. He may be necking with his girl, eating popcorn or candy, making wisecracks at the expense of the picture, or conceivably even raising aesthetic questions about the direction. He is certain to be wiggling in his seat and wondering why there is never room for his legs. During the shorts, cartoon, or interval, his attention is bound to wander from the screen in some way or other.

What is it going to wander to, in one of these new theatres which resemble nothing so much as a padded cell? It may be a shock to architects who think themselves both modern and democratic, but the stripped-down theatre is an authoritarian theatre. It insists that you watch the picture and nothing else. It says to the naturally curious and interested people who enter: "Now watch this!" It is like some kind of experimental setting for perception-frustration.

Naturally enough, people do not really enjoy this kind of thing. They like to be titillated and intrigued and a little bothered. They would rather be awed or surprised or even set to giggling than be subjected to the empty chill of what nowadays passes for standard architectural 'good taste.' It is

no accident, but by a law of the human organism, that people shun our carefully planned esplanades and open spaces: there is no life there. Confronted by an austere modern theatre, patrons hurry in and flit away afterwards as quickly as possible; there is none of the leisurely atmosphere we once thought of as part of the theatrical experience.

By contrast the old 'Fox' crawled with life: in its gargoyles, in its shifting spaces, its dramatic curtains, its impressive 'mighty Wurlitzer,' its intricate lighting. When you entered the rotunda of the old 'Roxy,' said its founder and manager 'Roxy' Rothafel, "You knew you were *somewhere*." Today's theatres are like too many of today's airports and banks and schools: they might be anywhere, and hence give a curious impression of being nowhere.

It may be thought that I am suggesting a return to the foolishness of the 'Fox.' I am not. But I *am* suggesting that the problem of the theatre is a symptomatic one for contemporary architecture, because it poses in the acutest and most obvious form the question of delight. We have mastered many problems of structure; we have abolished many of the vices of the past. When a delightful device appears, such as Mr. Edward Stone's screens, we snatch at it like drowning men, such is our desperation; and it is quickly multiplied to the point of idiotic satiation.

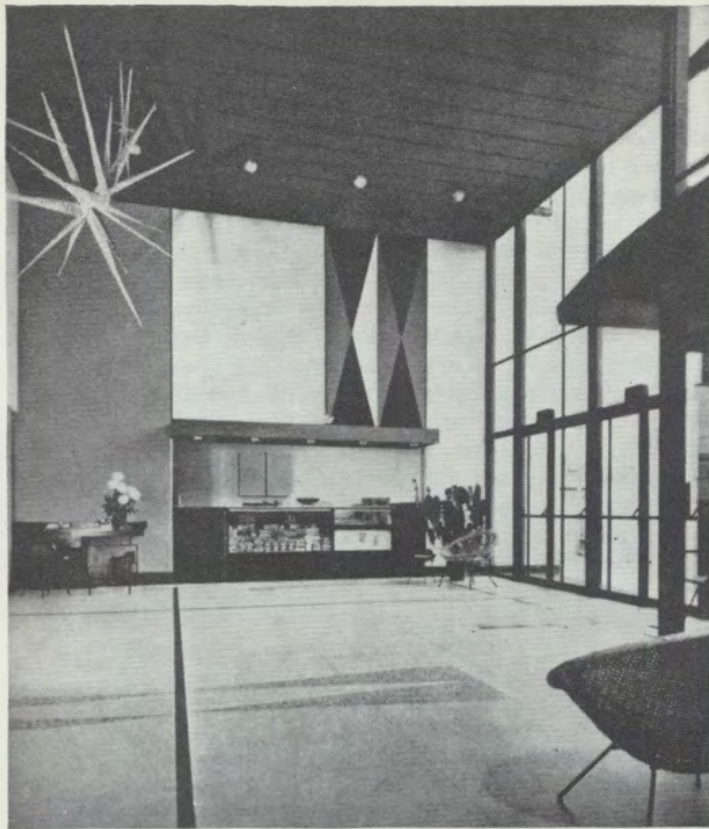
Let us be kind and omit names. But who would really find it enticing to enter a lobby like the one in which the 'antique' spinning machine surmounts the porcelain vending machine standing on the brick floor? (Be it noted by the intrepid architect that a theatre often makes more on its refreshment sales than on its tickets: this side of the operation deserves much more careful attention than it usually gets.) Who would not feel squashed and confined in some of the carefully drab modern lobbies? On the other hand, who would not feel exposed in the enormous bare cage of Lincoln Center's Philharmonic?

I have been at pains to search out every theatre mentioned in the architectural literature of the past decade. The grim, sterile patterns (which are described in the architectural journals as if they convey 'quiet luxury') are so far dominant that when I ran across a structure of some mild interest I found myself overjoyed.

Raymond Smith's 'Dallas' theatre in Dallas, for instance, has an interesting funnel-shaped lobby, an intelligently worked out system of parking and access, and a tasteful and varied use of wood; it also has a cry-room, one of the shopping centre theatre innovations which seems here to stay. The lobby of the 'Coronet' in Manhattan has been given a certain style and capacity to interest by turning it into an art gallery, though it has a cramped narrow shape.

If we go back a couple of decades, there was the 'Esquire,' one of the few theatres of any distinction built by a name architect (W. Pereira, 1938).¹ Built from the ground up, this was a neighbourhood theatre for the Gold Coast—the kind of house where, when I was working as an usher, I used to speculate whether a woman's buttons were diamonds or rhinestones. Its style is *Queen Mary-Moderne*—with a high, sweeping, curved wall of walnut veneer, a massive pillar, an oval 'Little Gallery' on the balcony level, mirrors to increase the apparent size of the lobby, a fairly elegant chandelier. Its lobby is a place where one might pass a few minutes with pleasure and a good deal of 'dignity.'

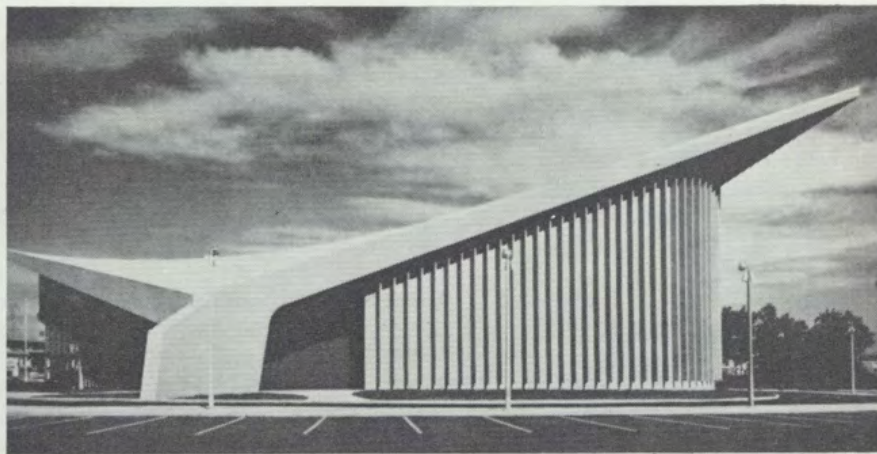
But let us look a little closer. What is that artificial tree doing on the street front? ("The architects designed a tree because they wanted a tree," *Architectural Forum* wrote, carrying form-following-function into the realm of the comic non-sequitur.) Why is the gallery, inviting intimate conversation, oval-shaped so that one's quiet words bounce eerily into the ears of a person twenty feet away? These



LEFT: FOYER OF THE CAPRI, SAN DIEGO. "... ONCE YOU WERE IN IT WOULDN'T BE HARD TO WAIT FOR THE FEATURE."

RIGHT: THE EDENS AT NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS.

BELOW: LADIES' LOUNGE AT THE FOX, SAN FRANCISCO, WITH CHANDELIER AND PINK BROCADE WALLS.



stylistic flaws do not, I submit, merely betray an occasional lapse of taste in an otherwise sound structure; they are symptomatic of an approach which is phoney. There is no structural reason why the gallery should be round; the tree is like those concrete timbers in the 'Japanese' gardens of the Huntington Hartford estate in Pasadena: maddening because they lack the variety of actual wood, because they will not decay nearly so soon, and most of all because they demonstrate an inexcusable affront towards the natural order.

No one quarrels with structural integrity, and some of the recent designs reflect an attempt on the architects' part to bring this quality to the work. At its best this can lead to the lacy open glass of the Lincoln Center lobby. Architecture which does not have this organic quality can hardly be considered architecture, but is more a kind of set-designing. However, the impulse to prune away false ornament has led to designs that are devoid of interest, dominated by the illusion that architecture should be, as the slang term has it, 'cool.'

A good example is one of the handful of intelligently designed theatres in the English-speaking world: the National Film Theatre under Waterloo Bridge in London.² This is hardly an exciting place, but it is at least a comfortable and inviting one. Its entrance and accessory spaces are carefully articulated (a club, offices, and a private screening room are included, as well as a foyer and projection booth). The auditorium, whose shape was largely dictated by the site under the bridge abutment, has an interesting pattern of curves. The ceiling slotted in a hexagonal pattern, the comically cumbersome but none the less intriguing sculptured masks for the various screen sizes, the wood panelling, are some thoughtful features. The auditorium has a certain elegant chill; but a chill none the less. The eye sweeps across its geometrical figures and masters them too easily; they impress as neat, controlled—and dull.

* * *

The fact is this: we literally *do not know* how to build a theatre which is both honest and interesting. We have been reduced to a hapless admission that the minimum necessities for movie exhibition are a large room, a screen at one end, a projection booth at the other, and a mess of seats in between. A kind of paralysis has set in, so that we are given nothing but this minimum, as though anything more would offend our spartan ideals. But the theatrical arts are not a spartan activity: stage and screen are civilised amusements—phenomena of the urban scene, part of that vast assortment of diversions which beat upon the consciousness of the city-dweller. For mercenary reasons, as well as for the sake of the art, it is necessary to find out how theatres may again be made interesting. Let me throw out the following propositions in hopes of stimulating debate.

First, *the auditorium is not a box*. Previously existing structures are of course usually boxes, and renovation may conceal but will not (and should not try to) change this fact. New structures, however, may take a great variety of forms, in plan and elevation alike, and the ingenious architect will discover a variety of structural principles that can elegantly apply. I once wanted to build a theatre on the Monterey coast which was to be a kind of giant Quonset pointing down towards the surf, with a glass end-wall before which the screen would rise at the opening of the show. R. B. Draper, an architect now of Nashville, once devised for me a marvellously ingenious system of descending cantilevered roof slabs, supported on partial hexagon-shaped supports which provided, all around the periphery of the auditorium, a series of alcoves for conversation, reading, coffee-drinking, and so on. There are endless novel possibilities for enclosing large spaces economically, which need to be explored.

Second, there needs to be a great *variety of accessory spaces*, as well as variety within the auditorium itself. The latter can be provided by seating levels, aisle patterns, walls or supporting members, manifestations of the accessory spaces, and so on. For example, there is no reason why the projection booth should be treated as a trade secret or some kind of shameful adjunct to the film process. It is properly a magic lantern; it deserves honour, or at the least, respect.³ The lounge areas should be articulated—focused upon the necessities of refreshment stand, restrooms, magazine rack, art displays, stills, posters, coffee-serving points, etc., but organised with a genial flow of space that will lead the spectator's curiosity through the building. No lounge which can be taken in at a glance is a very satisfying place to be in. The box-office, the essential transition point between outside and inside, needs formality and ease (and the mechanical facilities for handling the occasional queue). It is, after all, the portal where one sacrifices to enter the temple, and deserves treatment as such. The marquee area must provide shelter from rain or snow or sun; it must provide space for posters, stills, and other informative materials; the marquee itself and its lettering must be visible for some distance, and ought to be unique unto itself, not a replica of others on the street. The whole entrance design should lead the prospective spectator into the lobby.

Third, there needs to be great attention paid to *organic detail* which is interesting in itself, or can be made so. Why should heating or cooling ducts, for instance, not become giant Mondrian-like compositions upon the ceilings, replacing the nymphs-and-shepherds or clouds of the 'Fox'? Why should supporting members be covered over, if they are beautifully structured, as they should be? (Unless one is a convert to the 'new brutality' school.) Why should the lighting be concealed in alcoves, instead of carried upon elegant but contemporary chandeliers or other fixtures? If light is to be controlled, why should curtains not be beautiful rather than plain?

In sum, theatre design, like most of our architecture, direly needs honest enrichment. Enrichment does not necessarily imply added expense; the enrichment we need must flow from the utilisation, the creative shaping, of what must be present in any event. Such enrichment may indeed bring economies.

* * *

The responses of architects to the desolation left by the demise of the rococo palaces have been varied but almost totally unsuccessful. There is, for example, the obvious impulse to jazz up a plain auditorium with surface decoration, as in a cinema built within a hotel in Sao Paulo, which has murals resembling the splotches in the UN auditorium in New York.⁴ The same tendency appears in the 'Skarpa' in Warsaw, where tile walls and mosaics attempt to make dull spaces interesting.⁵ Or 'detailing' can be added, as in a very luxurious Berlin theatre whose redecoration consisted chiefly of adding wrought-iron railings all over the place.⁶

Or one can go for the super-dramatic—stark, wildly angled planes sticking out into the auditorium, as in a Lugano theatre—a kind of expressionist set-design fifty years behind its times.⁷ Somewhat similar is a Copenhagen theatre by Finn Juhl, which has small, supposedly decorative panels angled on the walls, providing spaces for photo displays and also helping to prevent sound reverberation—an interesting idea for a foyer, but inconvenient in an auditorium where people looking at the photos block the aisle.⁸ Or one can utilise some highly dramatic contemporary device like the folded-plane roof, and slap a clever 4-inch slab on top of one of the most awkward buildings in Italy, as was done in Genoa.⁹

Such strategies may be studied at length in Paul Bode's

book *Kino* (Munich: Verlag D. W. Gallwey, 1957) which demonstrates that on the continent post-war theatre building has been considerably more interesting than ours in America. Bode's own tastes run to the strongly dramatic and somewhat phoney, as in his 'Tivoli' in Kassel, Germany; his book abounds with examples of frantically modern decorative treatments with no architectural significance to speak of. (However, he gives a complete technical guide to theatre construction, down to the smallest details of working drawings and fixtures.)

Faintly more promising is the Mondrian or Mies tendency: to reduce the structural elements down to thin steel strips, with a good deal of glass, and hope that a certain lightness and grace will ensue. The 'Capri' in San Diego is still pretty dull, but it's a good try in this direction: a high, spacious foyer, with a neat cashier's booth (*Architectural Record* described it as a 'jewel box'), brilliant colours, and a dominating star-shaped suspended sculpture. The outside of the theatre hardly makes you want to go in, but once you were there it wouldn't be hard to wait for the feature. This same approach has been attempted in the piggy-back 'Cinema I and II' design in New York City—though this strikes an interesting urban note in having the glass-walled upstairs lobby look out over Third Avenue.¹⁰ The 'Edens' in Northbrook, Illinois, has an elegant hyperbolic-paraboloid roof; but the detailing is standard Austerity Modern.

We should also give good marks, though perhaps of a limited application, to Eugenio M. Rossi for his 'Esedra' in the marsh country west of Rome.¹¹ A wholesomely rural building of local stone and brick, this structure manages to be intelligent, varied, cheap, and adapted to the muggy climate of its site. Its triangular roof piers and brick-vault roof, and its combinations of wall materials, give it a very distinctive character.

Of anything that could remotely be termed an organic architecture, however, we see nothing. Nor, indeed, anything of substantial novelty of any kind. One quirky project¹² was for a circular structure containing sixteen small theatres served (via rear-projection screens) by a single central booth. This had a certain strength of imagination—though the operator's (or rather *operators*) problems in keeping sixteen projectors running and in focus staggers anyone who has tried to keep a competent level of projection on even one conventional screen. A Frenchman proposed a theatre submerged at the bottom of a lake, and another outburst of fancy was an underground egg-shaped shell structure proposed for New Orleans—of all places, since the high water-table there would immediately pop it out of the ground. And there are occasional yearnings for multiple-screen theatres, which only the advent of large electronic screens will make technically feasible, and which even then are unlikely (to put it mildly) to become anything but world's fair curiosities.

We have not, in fact, advanced in the past 17 years beyond the argument, as seen in Ben Schlanger's important 1948 article,¹³ that more 'functional' design will supposedly 'heighten the dramatic quality of the entertainment.' A larger screen, a vignettized picture, a somewhat higher general light level in the auditorium, and less gingerbread—this was the prescription. Then, ominously, this article describing "A New Architecture for the Movie Theatre" added guardedly: "How much of the social side of the theatre can be translated into design is not readily discerned." Surely it is about time to try.

* * *

What is to be done? By the architect whose client is a penny-pinching exhibitor wishing to face-lift a building whose age has now revealed its fundamental poverty of design, very little. By the architect whose client is doing a new or rebuilt theatre, everything. This would be, it perhaps bears repeating, an



"EARLY AMERICAN" DECOR IN A NEW CINEMA. "... THE ANTIQUE SPINNING WHEEL SURMOUNTS THE PORCELAIN VENDING MACHINE. ..."

architecture in which there are no dry formulas, in which every site, every town structure and tradition, every material, is treated as an integral part of the design, along with the business requirements. (There is no reason, too, why an old and good building cannot have its character brought out and strengthened by a contemporary architect, rather than plastered over into some false 'modernism,' especially in cities where some sense of style has carried over from the past—London, New York, Boston, San Francisco.)

It is easy to lose sight, amid the chicaneries and sells of the film industry, of the basic fact that the business of a theatre, like that of a museum, is the presentation of art—however deformed or prostituted it may sometimes be. The movie theatre is perhaps as near as we come, these days, to an unselfconscious 'temple.' We must ask architects to devise structures with some elegance: structures with ideas and coherence and grace, like the best films which will be presented in them: structures which, without flinching from or disguising the nature of modern life, manage to mould and transcend it. The emotions let loose in the dark interiors of these temples are strong ones. We need an architecture which is once again strong enough to house them fitly.

NOTES:

1. See *Architectural Forum*, April, 1938.
2. Architect: Hubert Bennett. See *Architectural Review*, July, 1958.
3. This is done in the "Hindenburgbau" in Stuttgart.
4. *Habitat*, May, 1959, p. 13.
5. *Baukunst und Werkform*, October, 1961, p. 582.
6. *Art and Industry*, January, 1954, p. 24.
7. *Werk*, September, 1959, p. 323.
8. *Interiors*, January, 1956, p. 76.
9. *Architettura*, June, 1960, p. 87.
10. *Progressive Architecture*, March, 1962, p. 84.
11. *Architectural Review*, October, 1958.
12. *Arts and Architecture*, June, 1954, p. 19.
13. *Architectural Record*, November, 1948, p. 120.



Giulietta degli Spiriti

WHEN *8½* CAME OUT, my admiration for the extraordinary prodigality of Fellini's imagination was tempered by doubts about the inconsistency of the film's conclusion. The famous circus carousel involving all the characters was a fascinating bit of cinema for its own sake; but Guido Anselmi's discovery that life must be accepted *en bloc*, that everything and everyone in it has a function and a purpose, came brusquely and without effective motivation. It looked like an expedient, a way out of the 'delightful confusion' thought up and activated with such verve by the author.

Giulietta degli Spiriti is basically, *mutatis mutandis*, another *8½*, in which the delightful confusion is no longer autobiographically referred to a male character (and a film director at that) but to a woman—to Giulietta Masina, Fellini's wife and the Gelsomina of *La Strada*. Tullio Kezich, a critic who is a partisan of Fellini's, has found in the figure of Giulietta a bourgeois reincarnation of Gelsomina, victim of "a modern Zampanò out of the world of public relations"—that's to say,

her husband. One might add that the optimistic finale of *Giulietta* has some affinities with that of *Notte di Cabiria*; still more to the point would be a comparison with the finale of *8½*.

The theme of betrayal is recurrent in Fellini's work, and stands out sharply among the many themes piled together in *8½*. Like the film director in *8½*, now Giulietta, the betrayed wife of Fellini's new film, very abruptly discovers for herself the meaning of life. She finally manages to drive out the fantasies which had obsessed her; she gets the measure of her own personal freedom and dignity, and so finds her place in the natural world. Fellini has said: "Giulietta alone, at the end of the film, should be able to act as a symbol of the discovery of individuality. The event she most feared, her husband's departure, turns out to be a blessing in disguise. Giulietta will no longer be dependent on the father figure who has—in spite of everything—enriched her life. She comes to

have a feeling of gratitude to him and to everything and everyone: even those people who seemed most violently hostile to her have contributed to her liberation. In short, Giulietta's true life begins when she escapes from under the shadow of her husband."

And not only from her husband, one might add. Also from the shadow of a Catholic education of the most sinister and obscurantist kind, whose nature is suggested by the school sequence with its funereal figures of nuns, in which the child Giulietta tries to immolate herself on an iron grating during an edifying display in honour of a female saint. In the film's finale the release from the iron grille achieved by the adult Giulietta (after the child Giulietta had been released by her eccentric old grandfather, a positive character symbolising an anarchist idea of freedom) assumes an obvious allusive significance.

It can't be said, however, that the relationship between the two moments of liberation is entirely clear; or that it's evident why Giulietta's self-discovery should take place at this precise moment. Why not sooner? For that matter, why not later? This is a weakness which reproduces exactly the central flaw of *8½*; though here the opportunistic 'miracle' solution is achieved with rather less in the way of blatant optimism, and as a result is also less suggestively spectacular. *8½* is an altogether richer and more inspired film. But what strikes one about both of Fellini's last pictures is the lack of balance between the complex and dazzling phantasmagoria he devises, and a 'message' which is by comparison slight and obvious, and could maliciously be reduced to the simple statement: "if the horns fit, put them on."

Nor is this the only harmful imbalance. Another, on a larger scale, is that between the modest personality of the central character (an ordinary, limited, narrow-minded little *bourgeoise*) and the unrestrained extravagance of her 'visions.' Here one is tempted to suspect that in an excess of enthusiasm the director's own imagination has taken over from his heroine's. The dazzling kaleidoscope of *Giulietta degli Spiriti* becomes a jumble of impressions, some artistically and poetically justified, some seeming to have been planned cerebrally out of a conscious desire to shock, and altogether having the effect of overloading the film, so that its effects become ends in themselves.

One reason for this total impression may be that, with few exceptions, the invention itself is unoriginal. That an author should keep returning to congenial motifs is not only excusable but logical and right. Indeed, the whole corpus of Fellini's work presents in an exemplary and coherent form a constant recurrence of certain themes, figures and settings. Here, however, the effect is less of a return to basic themes than of a repetition of a whole repertoire of effects—and effects which are beginning to look worn out, despite Fellini's attempt to renew them by dressing them up in a garment of fabulous colour. The results obtained by Gianni Di Venanzo's camera-work are deliberately synthetic and often of fantastic elegance and delicacy. Credit is also due to the set design and especially the costumes of Piero Gherardi, which are as usual brilliant, if this time a little overpowering. The give-away comes with Nino Rota's music, itself somewhat tired and derivative from his own work for *La Dolce Vita* and *8½*.

One of Fellini's most characteristic motifs is the world of the circus. Here it turns up again, fairly successfully, and provides a starting point for the most original and harmoniously bizarre of the film's sequences: that of the grandfather's escape with the dancer in an antediluvian aeroplane. There's a distinct play element here, and a powerful implicit plea for freedom. Equally effective is the school sequence: back to *8½* again, but with nuns instead of priests, and the child Giulietta taking the place of the little boy in black.

These are the high points of an over-abundant and uneven work, a jumble of odds and ends, sometimes splendid in their own right, thrown out by an imagination which seems a

prisoner of itself. This does not mean, however, given the capriciousness and the overflowing opulence of Fellini's imagery, that the repetition of certain motifs should not suggest intriguing new solutions. For example there is the theme of magic and the esoteric in general, always very much alive with Fellini, which here runs through the film in a succession of elaborate variations. Not all the variations, however, are on the same level, and frequently the author seems to have lost all sense of proportion. The same point might be made about the parties, the masquerades, the carousels of sundry 'picturesque' characters, which reappear obstinately and insistently and far less spontaneously than in *La Dolce Vita* and *8½*. Even some of the faces are the same, accentuating the spectator's sense of *déjà vu*, and his feeling that all this is neither particularly authentic nor necessary. There's a grotesque 'ballet' staged round the central character, in which a number of the figures (I'm thinking particularly of the nymphomaniac sculptress), seem merely forced and conventional, literary and rather tasteless into the bargain.

The thread which ought to control this interweaving of visions, apparitions, human and superhuman presences, is obvious. Giulietta, a woman who starts by suffering from her husband's indifference, then begins to suspect him of deceiving her and finally learns that this is in fact the case, is naturally attracted, even without outside instigation, to the esoteric. It is in this direction that she looks first of all for help and consolation. But she tries other paths as well, hesitates on the threshold of other temptations. She tries various forms of evasion, from a retreat into the realm of daydreams, to the initiatives which lead her into contact with a kind of mythology of sex, to the idea of retaliation against her disloyal husband, and the idea of suicide. The point of arrival of this chaotic itinerary is the moment of catharsis when all the monsters are finally put to flight, in the green shade of the pinewood at Fregene.

This conclusion is marked by a kind of vague, almost pantheistic spiritualism which is hardly new in Fellini's work (one need only think of *La Strada*); while what goes before can best be described as a precarious balance between the esoteric and the erotic, the latter being represented most notably by Susy (Sandra Milo), Giulietta's sexy neighbour, and her curious *entourage*. Fellini has declared: "Susy is the incarnation of the heroine's mortified and repressed femininity: an over-compensated, overblown figure who is all sex. She is a kind of love sorceress, a mistress of eroticism. She represents one facet of Giulietta's character, the opposite of the little saint on the grating, who stands for the masochistic aspect, the ability to find a perverse satisfaction in frustration."

It is clear, both from these words and from the entire context of the work, that *Giulietta degli Spiriti* (and *8½* before it) is the creation of a man who has been influenced in various ways by psychoanalysis—an interest which Fellini himself has said is that of a dilettante, an eclectic, hungry for any stimulus that could prove positive.

In conclusion, *Giulietta degli Spiriti* is once again a *summa*, a recapitulation of Fellini's predilections and obsessions. As Kezich puts it, the film is "the illustrated catalogue" of his world. And this without doubt remains its most genuine aspect, even down to that insistent enjoyment of mystification which is such a fundamental component of Fellini's personality. But it is just because it is a *film d'auteur* in the fullest sense of the term that it bears these unmistakable marks of a talent turning in upon itself. Federico Fellini has reached a crucial point in his career. The fact that he has announced, however vaguely, his intention of making a film that will be straightforward and simple, and utterly different from the last three, suggests that he is aware of the need to escape from a dead end.

GIULIO CESARE CASTELLO

Translated by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

IN THE PICTURE

Chaplin Meets the Press

IS IT THRILLING, asked a friend, to see him in the flesh for the first time? And the answer is that somehow it isn't; more of a puzzle rather, to try to find in this spry, well-fed, lively, neatly turned-out figure in dark glasses (and not nearly as small as I had always imagined) either the old Charlie, or a man well on his way towards eighty. Bright-eyed, clear-voiced, quick-talking, he is, if not exactly youthful, fairly ageless. It is, of course, from use that he is able to remain quite untroubled by being the focus of a heavy stampede of pressmen and photographers such as was produced by his press conference at the Savoy last November.

There is never much to be learned from this kind of affair: anyone who is good at it, like Chaplin, knows exactly what he wants to say, and however irrelevant the questions may be, the answers will all quickly come back to the point. And the point in this instance was that Mr. Chaplin was going to make a new film. For the first time in nearly half a century he would not be his own producer: "And it's wonderful. I don't have a worry. I can extend myself as I please, and it is only my fault if the picture doesn't come off." No expense would be spared. The film would be in colour and have a fourteen-week shooting schedule. What was the budget? "I don't think that's anybody's business," he said, but very amiably.

Mr. Chaplin had, he said, two great stars: Marlon Brando and dear Sophia Loren. He had seen Sophia in a film and known at once that she was perfect for the part. What was the film? He really couldn't remember; it was so long ago. Was it *Marriage Italian Style*? No, no, it wasn't that. Was it *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*? Yes. Yes—that was the film. Anyway, she was perfect for the part. (In a roneoed statement Mr. Chaplin said: "The prospect of working with such a superb combination as Sophia and Marlon generates great expectations of thrill and pleasure and makes me very anxious to get started.")

The picture would be called *A Countess from Hong Kong*. He had wanted to call it *The Countess*, but someone already had rights on that title. He had had the screenplay since the time of *The Great Dictator*, but he'd updated it. He would not say much about the story except that it is set in the period just after the Second World War, and a lot of the action takes place aboard ship.

It has no political message. Asked to be more precise, Mr. Chaplin said he was sorry but he was tired; which he clearly was not. He would only add modestly that, "the situation is riotously funny but justified and believable. . . It is not slapstick, but comedy of character, taken from life."

"I have no role myself, thank God! No, it's not the first time I've directed and not played. Around 1924 (*sic*) I made a film called *A Woman of Paris* . . . Of course I may walk on, like Hitchcock does . . ."

Chaplin said that his son Sydney would play in it. "He's a very good comedian and I think he will contribute to the lilt and hilarity of the screenplay." (Chaplin always chooses his words carefully if sometimes curiously.) Inevitably the columnists asked if his son Michael would play. Chaplin was grave. "I'm not answering any personal questions . . ." and when the newsman tried to insist, "Don't try to get smart-alecky with me . . ." He was not so solemn when asked about America. He had no plans to go there unless it happened to be in connection with the picture; but in any case he had no quarrel with Hollywood. "I wrote a book, and I think America came out of it pretty well. I happen to like Hollywood. Anyway I don't think that's pertaining much to the picture."

Mr. Chaplin answered a few more questions. How did it feel to be at work again? "Marvellous. Thank God I'm still active. I can still think up two or three laughs. I'm getting on, but right now I have everything before me. The whole world is my oyster." ("His what?" the reporter who had quizzed him about his son asked a friend.) What did he think about A. J. P. Taylor's new book, in which Taylor linked him with Shakespeare as a cultural influence? "I think he has damn' good judgment," said Mr. Chaplin merrily. ("Linked him with who?" asked the same reporter.)

Then Chaplin skilfully withdrew himself from the main group and moved from knot to knot of the people who hadn't heard his main conference. "You see I saw Sophia Loren in a film called *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*," he was saying, "and I knew at once . . ."

A man from Paramount was answering questioners with the hushed respect which marks the honeymoon period of this sort of production relationship. "How's it feel to be employing Mr. Chaplin? I keep feeling that really *he* is employing *us*. It's a great privilege."

And, incorrigibly, at the telephone in the corner, a reporter was already ringing through his copy: "Charles Chaplin, world famous clown who began life in London's East End, today refused to comment when asked . . ."

DAVID ROBINSON

Censorship in London

CINEMAS LICENSED BY THE OLD L.C.C. used to contain in their licences a prohibition against exhibiting any film which was "likely to be injurious to morality or to encourage or incite to crime, or to lead to disorder, or to be in any way offensive in the circumstances to public feeling or which contains any offensive representation of a living person." This prohibition had its origin in proposals made to the Council in December 1915, and was embodied in the Home Office model conditions of August 1916. The new Greater London Council, the L.C.C.'s successor in licensing matters, has now abolished this and replaced it by another prohibition, against exhibiting any film "which is likely to encourage or to incite to crime, or to lead to disorder, or to stir up hatred against any section of the public in Great Britain on grounds of colour, race or ethnic or national origins, or the effect of which is, if taken as a whole, such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely to see it."

Apart from the fact that this is the first alteration in wording since the L.C.C. adopted permanent rules for film censorship, the change is also important in marking for the first time a desire by an English film censoring body to restrict censorship to matter which is prohibited by the ordinary criminal law. The emphasis in the old rule was on the avoidance of giving offence, and gave wide discretion to the Licensing Committee (and its predecessors) when faced with a film. The new provision is worded so

SHARMILA TAGORE (JOURNALIST) AND UTTAM KUMAR (FILM STAR) IN SATYAJIT RAY'S NEW FILM, "NAYAK".



as to prohibit films which would offend against the criminal law of obscenity, infringe the new Race Relations Act (which did not actually come into force until three weeks after the Council passed the rule), or encourage crime or disorder. No other grounds are left for censorship in the Greater London area.

The effect of the change may not be felt immediately. This particular rule is a long-stop; the general provision, which appears elsewhere in the licence, requires the cinema manager to show only films which have been approved by the British Board of Film Censors. That provision is unchanged. The new rule will only come into use when an exhibitor or distributor appeals to the Council from the British Board of Film Censors; the appeal will then come before the Licensing Committee of the Council, and the Committee will be bound to pass the film unless it falls into one of the new categories of prohibition.

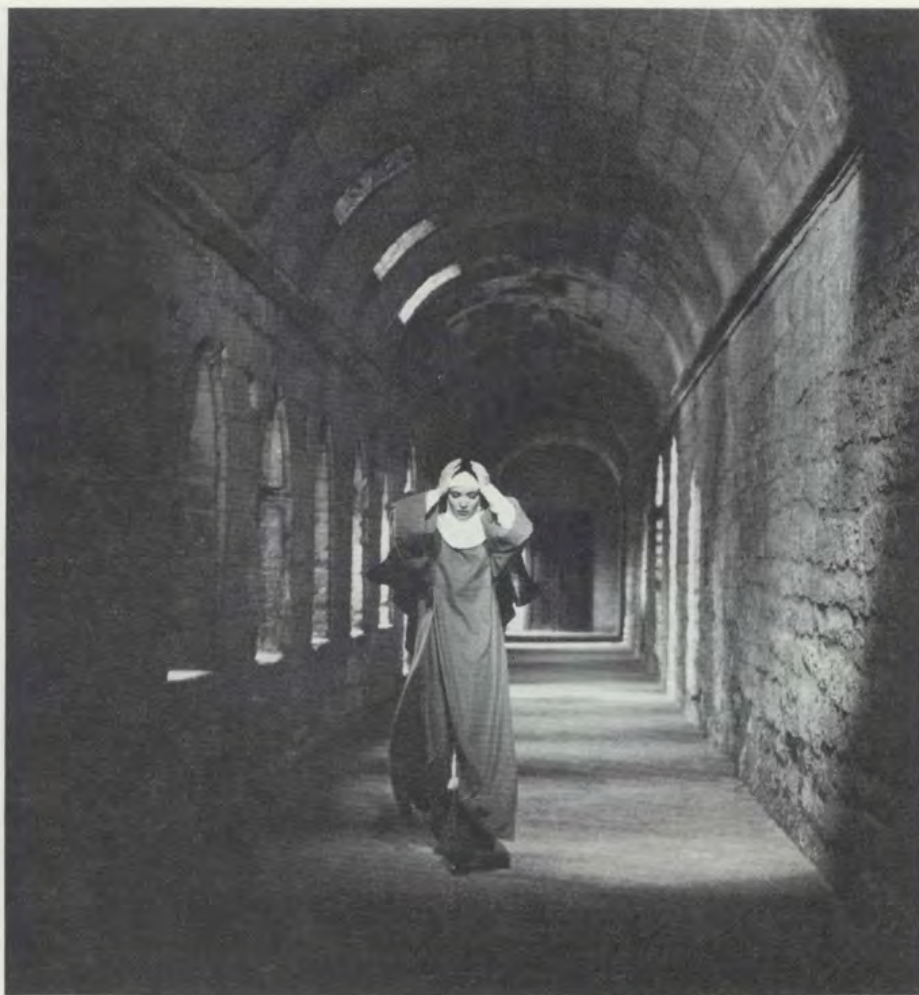
On the surface, therefore, the general working of the censorship is not altered. The B.B.F.C. will continue to operate in its old way and ban or cut films on the same principles as before. But in practice the Board is likely to amend its approach gradually, under pain of seeing itself overruled by the Council if it does not restrict itself fairly carefully to the Council's new criteria. In one respect especially, the new rule may have a revolutionary effect. The wording of the prohibition against immoral films is based on the Obscene Publications Act, 1959, which introduced the need to look at the publication *as a whole*. If this rule is interpreted strictly, it should mean that such films may only be either passed or banned, but not cut.

The long-term influence of the new rule is uncertain. Much depends on the B.B.F.C., but the Board is unlikely to make any drastic changes unless the other local councils throughout the country follow London's lead. This has happened in the past (the present system is based squarely on the rules adopted by the L.C.C. in 1924 and then followed by the other authorities); and it may well happen this time too, especially if the Home Office supports the G.L.C. If so, the British position will be moving closer to the American, where official censors may only prohibit illegal films. It only remains for the Council to take a much easier step and exempt such functions as the London Film Festival (of which it is the co-sponsor) from censorship formalities entirely.

NEVILLE HUNNINGS

La Religieuse

DIDEROT AND HIS FRIEND GRIMM amused themselves by making up imaginary letters from a nun forcibly imprisoned in her convent, and sent them to a friend, the Marquis de Croismare. Out of this imaginary correspondence came the idea for *La Religieuse*, a work which sums up the whole *esprit* of 18th century France. Too poor to marry off their youngest daughter, Suzanne, her family bully her into entering a convent. After the death of the mother superior who had befriended her, Suzanne tries to escape. But 18th century society had its methods of defending itself by restricting personal liberty. The doors of a second convent close behind her; and this time she inspires in her new superior a violent physical attraction. She escapes again, is hunted by the police, and goes from one misfortune to another. Finally, tiring of living, she jumps from a window and dies with her arms spread in



ANNA KARINA IN "LA RELIGIEUSE".

the form of a cross—the position of a nun taking her vows. All the same, Suzanne is not anti-religious: her revolt is not against religion but against constraint.

Jacques Rivette adapted and staged *La Religieuse* as a play about three years ago in Paris, though without a great deal of success. It's easy to see what attracted him in this picture of convent life, this rich social satire with its sturdy apologia for freedom. Now he is filming it, with Anna Karina (who played the part in his stage version) as Suzanne, Micheline Presle and Liselotte Pulver as the two mothers superior, and Francisco Rabal as the priest who joins Suzanne in her flight.

A good deal less easy to understand are the various forms of pressure which have held up this project, first broached several years ago. The censors and religious pressure groups have intervened more or less openly, and the film runs a risk of being totally banned. In the circumstances, the producer Georges de Beauregard is to be congratulated on his courage and tenacity, in being ready to invest a budget of not much less than 200 million old francs in this colour production. The film is being shot entirely on location, around Avignon. But among the problems and fusses which have beset it are various polite refusals of permission to shoot in convents and cloisters of the period.

Rivette is following Diderot closely. For music he wants only choirs, masses, harpsichord airs, occurring where there is some natural context within the film. From his cameraman, Alain Levent (*La Chance et l'Amour*, *Une Balle au Cœur*, *Cover Girl*), he's asked for a cold formality to match the

austere decor. Rejecting cuts and close-ups, he's using many long takes, and mounting the camera on new equipment, less cumbersome than a dolly, to get the constant tracking and involved camera movements that he wants. He's looking for a limpid rhythm—a Preminger rhythm, if you like, though Rivette's own feeling for Preminger is now unenthusiastic. Time will tell if he has found the right style for this soberly passionate story.

GILLES JACOB

Reluctant God

IT IS A VERY healthy sign when someone as intellectually eminent, internationally respected and socially dignified as Satyajit Ray suddenly finds that he no longer has to play God.

Indians are justly proud of the fact that it was they who discovered Satyajit Ray, and not the Museum of Modern Art (a favourite American argument in drawing-room discussions on Aid), nor the Cannes Festival (with the valuable backing of Georges Sadoul). Of course the last three were important internationally, and Indians are duly grateful and appreciative. But they are inclined to point out a little fiercely that Ray has received every possible national honour, beginning with the national film award for *Pather Panchali* the year it was released. And that *Pather Panchali* was financed by the West Bengal Government when Ray's own meagre resources had failed. Ray had enjoyed a reasonable amount of box-office success and intelligent acclaim from the first.



THE LAST SCENE OF "THE WRONG BOX", BRYAN FORBES' VERSION OF THE NOVEL BY STEVENSON AND LLOYD OSBOURNE.

The first general critical rumblings really started with *Abhijan*. The reviewers were sparing with their superlatives; and with *Kanchenjunga* (his only venture in colour) people suddenly realised that Ray was not going to make a *Pather Panchali* every time (which would be too dull for words). Some lone critics actually praised Ray for having the courage to make interesting minor films of an experimental nature in between masterpieces. Surely he was young and established enough to try out his hand at anything he liked. Especially if he produced *Mahanagar* and *Charulata* directly after.

When Ray wrote the music for *Abhijan* there were again faint murmurings, and Ray entered into his first really intensive argument in a newspaper when he challenged the musical theories put forth by an eminent Indian film critic about the incidental music (by Ray himself) in *Charulata*. Just before the time of writing, Calcutta was greatly agitated and positively cross with Ray for entering a spirited argument in a national daily about a film by another director. "It's simply not done," they protested, "Ray arguing about another director's film in such ordinary terms."

And then the scene shifted to his new two-story film, *Kapurush O Mahapurush* (*The Coward and the Hero*). This is no *Pather Panchali* either, merely a social vignette and a triangle at that. I do not blame Kenneth Tynan overmuch for not placing *Kapurush* much above a television play. Its nuances are far too local and delicate, and I feel its subtle satire about the planter's way of life and the frustrating college episode might not get across to foreigners. It is typically understated and gently satiric Ray. As for *Mahapurush*, the purists are furious that it is not played like broad farce, as it always is on the stage, and that some of their favourite lines have been cut out.

And now the controversy has shifted, in

much milder tones, to the hero of his new film, *Nayak*. The scenario is by Ray and the theme is the not-too-original one (another point against Ray) of a *matinée* idol who has risen to the top of the film world by dubious means. The action takes place in a compartment of the air-conditioned express train from Calcutta to Delhi and has a wide range of characters, from a smart advertising executive to an understanding woman journalist (the heroine). Ray is sure to draw every ounce of subtle and affectionately ironic detail out of these modern "types."

What has irritated some people is his choice of Uttam Kumar, a *matinée* idol from the Bengal screen, to play the *matinée* idol. They feel it is all wrong. Ray should have discovered an unknown amateur again, of course. What they forget is that Uttam Kumar is a particularly intelligent *matinée* idol who was delighted at the thought of being directed by Ray. He is also a good actor. The god has failed again. And thank heavens, say some of us.

AMITA MALIK

The Kolberg Case

ON JUNE 1st, 1943, Goebbels instructed Veit Harlan, his favourite director: "I commission you to make a film epic, *Kolberg*. The film is to show, through the example of the city which gives the film its title, how a common resolution at home and at the front can overcome all enemies." (The siege of the Prussian town of Kolberg was a celebrated event of the Napoleonic wars: in real life the town surrendered; in the film last-ditch bravery, by local militia as well as troops, wins the day.) The Minister wrote in his diary: "I expect great things from this Harlan film. It fits exactly the political-historical situation we shall be wanting to record. . ."

The situation, however, was to be other than Goebbels had imagined. When the film

was ready for showing, on the 12th anniversary of Hitler's coming to power, history had caught up with it. *Kolberg*, the last film to bear the title 'Film of the Nation' of the Third Reich, was seen by only a few Germans in 1945. The Allies put it on the proscribed list, and no distributor dared submit it to the FSK (*Filmselbstkontrolle*) in Wiesbaden.

In October, 1965, however, Hanns Eckelkamp, head of the young and active Atlas distribution company, decided that the methods used by German cinemas in the past in dealing with such films had been unsatisfactory. So they were. From 1945 onwards the Allies had allowed the screening of 'non-political' films from the Goebbels era. Feature films with political undertones were slightly retouched; political *Tendenzfilme* were more or less cut before being released. Open presentation of National Socialist themes was forbidden, but latent ideology was permissible, so long as the film could pass as 'non-political'. So such films as Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Die Entlassung* (about Bismarck and the need for authoritarian government) and Harlan's own *Die goldene Stadt* could be shown.

With a certain amount of work *Kolberg* could also have been de-Nazified. In 1963 Harlan told Eckelkamp's partner Liesenhoff: "with a few cuts and new synchronisation, I can turn *Kolberg* into a democratic film." This was precisely what Eckelkamp did not want. And there can be no doubt of his integrity, nor of the necessity to give the German public a genuine picture of the films of the Third Reich. Since October, 1965, *Kolberg* has been shown in West German cinemas uncut, but with the addition of an introduction, some intervening shots from newsreels of the period when it was made, and a short epilogue. The commentary is designed to make clear to the audience the film's propagandist purpose: the *Volksturm* (conscription of children and

old people), the scorched earth and last-ditch policy. It does not emphasise the irrationality of the 'German-Volk' ideology. Rather, the epilogue claims that the film only exploited 'genuine emotions' for a bad end.

It is difficult to assess the effect of *Kolberg* on the Germans of today. The film has drawn large crowds, but it appears that only older people can understand it. It is probably too badly made for the young people who have been trained in the school of American action cinema. The sentimentality of the love scenes, the hollow pathos of the political declarations, are simply felt to be ludicrous by an audience coming new to a 20-year-old film whose main interest is that it has become something of an historical cause célèbre.

ENNO PATALAS

Dietrich in Sydney

MARLENE DIETRICH'S TWO WEEKS in Sydney came as part of a first Australian tour which took her to two states and subjected her to some notably ungallant Press interviews. As beautiful as in *Morocco* 35 years ago, she proved to be far less aloof than legend had suggested, and willing to talk about her work in the cinema all the way from *The Blue Angel* to her latest appearance in a bit part in *Paris When It Sizzles*. Far from being an aficionado of the cinema herself, she still pays credit to von Sternberg for everything she knows, and has generously chosen to ignore his own wounding remarks about her in his recently published *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*. She says that the cast was never informed of what was going on in any of the pictures she made with him: he secretly pre-planned the entire action on the drawing-board, shot dozens of takes, and took bits of the best ones, fitting them together like a jigsaw puzzle the puppet players didn't understand until they saw it at the rough-cut stage. "The engagement party scene in *Morocco* was shot in 110 takes," she said. "And I still don't know what I was supposed to be doing."

The original novel on which *Morocco* was based, *Amy Jolly*, had been found by Dietrich, she told me, and suggested as a possible subject to von Sternberg with no intention of playing it herself. Still very much the *grande bourgeoisie*, she had been shocked at the suggestion that she should play the café singer in the film (and hadn't liked herself in *Blue Angel*, which she says now she considers vulgar and tasteless). The audience walked out *en masse* at the *Morocco* preview because Paramount had advertised it as another Gary Cooper Western. But the reviews saved the day, and the picture became a huge box-office hit.

The Scarlet Empress, Dietrich said, had been particularly hard to make because there had never been a script and the actors had simply been fed lines from hour to hour. The only film of the series she remembers with genuine pleasure is *The Devil is a Woman*, which von Sternberg himself photographed—officially. "He really did all the others as well, but he couldn't claim credit because he wasn't a member of the union."

Lubitsch, by contrast, had "no knowledge of the camera," Dietrich told me: "We would sit back to back on special settees and say to the camera 'I love you' because he couldn't manage the scene if we sat side by side and looked at each other. And *Desire*, for which he's often credited, was copied shot by shot from a German picture, Brigitte Helm's *The Wonderful World of Angoulême*."

For Wilder's *A Foreign Affair*, Dietrich said, June Havoc had made tests of the role of the ex-Nazi café singer and Wilder had flown the tests to Paris to show her that the role could be playable (she had objected at first to performing as a Nazi). More recently, she had enjoyed making *Witness for the Prosecution* ("Charlie Laughton taught me cockney for the role"). If her favourite picture had been *The Devil is a Woman*, what, I finally asked her, had been her least favourite? "*The Garden of Allah*," she said without hesitation. "Selznick's script! Oh, horror! I swear I said, 'Nobody but God and I knows what is in my heart' 107 times. Finally I said to Josh Logan, who was dialogue director on the picture, 'Josh, I've said that line 107 times. Let Charles Boyer say it the 108th, after all he's playing an unfrocked priest, isn't he?' So Josh told him to do it. Josh still lays them in the aisles with that story."

CHARLES HIGHAM

A Place in the Sun

TELEVISION'S ATTITUDE TO THE feature films it acquires is a constant source of complaint. Cuts make nonsense of continuity, plot and meaning; commercial breaks undermine mood. (Recent cases on ITV include Hawks' *Red River* and Wyler's *The Desperate Hours*, both pitifully shorn of impact.) A few months ago, a group of British film-makers wrote a letter of protest to *The Times* about the whole practice of TV cutting. "Television," they said, "is guilty of what we can only call defamation of talent." But the commercial TV companies go on cutting, and it's only on the BBC that one can hope to see a film intact and uninterrupted.

Now, in America, George Stevens has announced a legal action against the National Broadcasting Company, Paramount Pictures, and unnamed advertising agencies and sponsors, in an attempt to prevent NBC from screening *A Place in the Sun* on television in anything but its integral form. He is asking for a million dollars

damages if the defendants cut the picture and insert commercials, and "an additional \$1,000,000 as exemplary damages in such an event."

Mr. Stevens is able to bring this action because of the circumstances in which *A Place in the Sun* was made. It was a production of Liberty Films, the company set up just after the war by Stevens, Wyler and Capra. Although their stock was later acquired by Paramount, making the company a Paramount-owned subsidiary, Stevens' legal complaint alleges that his original contract with Liberty gave him, under all circumstances, "the right to edit, cut and score each picture." Any TV screening, the complaint alleges, which cuts the film or inserts "commercial and other messages, skits, speeches, playlets and music," is "in derogation and violation" of this right of sole responsibility. Moreover, showing the film in a "distorted, truncated and segmented version" will make the filmmaker "an involuntary party to a false presentation," damaging to his creative reputation.

"A fine motion picture is a thing of value to both its creator and its audience," says Mr. Stevens in a personal statement. "Using a film as a means of lulling an audience into a receptive mood for a quick cut to the loud blast and hard sell of commercials is a destruction of that value and a mutilation of the film."

PENELOPE HOUSTON

Venice Prize

IN THE CULTURAL and critical journals' section of the Film Book and Magazine Exhibition, held each year in conjunction with the Venice Film Festival, SIGHT AND SOUND won the First Prize for 1965—a square silver plaque engraved with a disarmingly benevolent Lion of St. Mark. Various international magazines, including *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Cinema Nuovo*, received special mentions in the same category.

REHEARSAL FOR "SECONDS", JOHN FRANKENHEIMER'S FILM ABOUT A MAN WHOSE PERSONALITY IS CHANGED BY BRAINWASHING. JEFF COREY AND ROCK HUDSON ON SOFA; JAMES WONG HOWE CROUCHING BEHIND FRANKENHEIMER.





BUSTER KEATON TAKES A WALK

a farce by
FEDERICO GARCIA
LORCA

IN 1930 GARCIA LORCA left proud, grave, unhurried Andalusia and found himself in New York. He was appalled. For him it was "a Senegal with machinery." He wrote a group of tormented surrealist poems in which he set down his terror of the concrete canyons of the city where men stagger "unslept like those who've just come from a bloody shipwreck." When his horror had eased a bit, it amused him to recall his favourite American fool, Buster Keaton, and to imagine him making an innocent's journey through the desperate landscape. It was probably shortly after finishing the agonised *Poeta en Nueva York* that he wrote the sweet little squib, dadaist, surrealist, "absurd," called *El Paseo de Buster Keaton*. It remained unnoticed among his papers (missing inclusion in the *Obras Completas* published by Losada in Buenos Aires) until it appeared in the small collection of *Tres Farsas* (Colección Teatro de Bolsillo, Mexico City, 1959).

Characters: BUSTER KEATON

The cock
The owl
A Negro
An American woman
A young girl

COCK: Cock a doodle doo.

Enter Buster Keaton with his four sons, hand in hand.

KEATON: My poor little boys. *(He draws a wooden sword and kills them).*

COCK: Cock a doodle doo.

KEATON *(counting the corpses on the ground)*: One, two, three and four. *He takes a bicycle and rides away. Among old car-tyres and petrol-cans a Negro is eating his straw hat.*

KEATON: What a marvellous afternoon.

A parrot flutters about in the neutral-coloured sky.

KEATON: It's great, riding a bicycle.

OWL: Chirri chirri chirri chi.

KEATON: How sweetly the birds sing.

OWL: Chirrrrrrrr.

KEATON: Stupendous.

A pause. Impassively, Buster Keaton rides through the rushes and across the rye-patch. The countryside grows smaller under the wheels of his bicycle. The machine takes on a single dimension. It could enter a book, stretch out in a bake-oven. Buster Keaton's bicycle hasn't a caramel saddle and pedals of sugar, of the sort that wicked men might wish for. It is a bicycle like any other, except that it is the only one that's permeated with innocence. Adam and Eve would run in terror if they saw a glass of water, but on the other hand they would stroke Keaton's bicycle.

KEATON: Ah love, love!

Buster Keaton falls off. The bicycle runs away from him. It chases after two huge grey butterflies. It goes like a madman, half a millimetre off the ground.

KEATON *(picking himself up)*: I've nothing to say. What was I saying?

A VOICE: You're crazy.

KEATON: O.K.

He walks on. His sad infinite eyes, like those of a new-born beast of burden, are dreaming of lilies,





angels and silk sashes. His eyes are like the bottom of a glass, like a mad child's. Very ugly. Very beautiful. An ostrich's eyes. Human eyes in the exact balance of melancholy. In the distance, Philadelphia can be seen. The inhabitants of this city know the old poem of the Singer sewing machine and how it circulates among the hothouse roses, yet they never understand the subtle poetic difference between a cup of hot tea and a cup of cold tea. Philadelphia shines in the distance.

KEATON: This is a garden.

An American woman with celluloid eyes comes through the grass.

WOMAN: Good evening.

Buster Keaton smiles, and looks at the woman's shoes in close-up. What shoes! We ought never to have introduced those shoes! It took the hides of three crocodiles to make them.



KEATON: I wish—

WOMAN: Do you have a sword decorated with myrtle leaves? *Buster Keaton lets his shoulders droop and raises his right foot.*

WOMAN: Do you have a ring with a poisoned stone? *Buster Keaton slowly closes his eyes and raises his left foot.*

WOMAN: What about it?

Four seraphim with wings of heavenly gauze dance among the flowers. The girls of the city are playing the piano as if they were riding bicycles. The waltzes, the moon, the motor-boats, shake our friend's delicate heart. To everyone's surprise, autumn has invaded the garden like water in the geometrical plot of a sugar-lump.

KEATON (sighing): I wish I were a swan. But I can't be even though I'd like to. Because what have I done with my hat? Where are my paper collar and my watered-silk tie? What a calamity!

A young girl, wasp-waisted, with beehive coiffure, enters on a bicycle. She has the head of a nightingale.

YOUNG GIRL: Whom have I the honour of greeting?

KEATON (with a bow): Buster Keaton.

The young girl falters and falls off her bicycle. Her striped stockings tremble in the grass like two dying zebras. Simultaneously, in a thousand cinemas, a gramophone is announcing: There are no nightingales in America.

KEATON (kneeling): Miss Elinor! Forgive me! It wasn't me, Miss Elinor! (lower) Miss! (very quietly) Miss! (he kisses her).

Over the horizon of Philadelphia shines the glittering star of the police.

TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION
BY A. L. LLOYD

WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THE STILL OF KEATON LOOKING THROUGH THE BARS—POSSIBLY "THE GOAT" (1921). FAR LEFT: "THE GENERAL". LEFT: "OUR HOSPITALITY". ABOVE: "GO WEST" AND "OUR HOSPITALITY".

KEATON AT VENICE



"THE RAILRODDER".

by John Gillett and James Blue

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH 1965 WAS Buster Keaton day at the Venice Festival. At the Press Conference after the preview of *Film* (in which Keaton interprets a Beckett script), the appearance of the familiar stocky figure determinedly stumping on to the platform was the signal for a standing ovation of wild affection from the press. "Caro Buster . . ." said somebody happily, after a long pause while Keaton blandly seated himself among a line of fussing officials, and went on to ask what he thought of the Beckett film. "I don't know what it was all about," the hoarsely grating voice promptly replied, "perhaps you can tell me." A hand waved expressively in the air: "The camera was behind me all the time. I ain't used to that."

What was he doing in Italy? He was making a comedy called *Two Marines and a General*—"I'm The General." Loud cheers made it clear that the audience agreed, and an attempt by the young lady valiantly struggling with three languages to translate this as "Il Maresciallo" was drowned by roars of protest.

Keaton was obviously warming to his task. He stood up and started talking without waiting for questions, and spoke of the new Dick Lester film he was shortly joining in Spain. "I've had several other offers, but couldn't take 'em. No time to spare"—and there was a certain satisfaction in the way he said these last words, as if his present activity made up a little

for the waste and neglect of the last twenty years. One notes that, unlike certain comedians, Keaton does not need to keep up a stream of wisecracks. Buster himself had taken over the Palazzo, in full command of his audience once again.

At the evening gala show, more unexpectedly, the smart Venetian audience also rose to their feet with delighted applause as the celebrities took their places. Somebody in the next seat poked Keaton. He looked surprised. "For me?" one could almost hear that dead-pan eyebrow exclaim; and he got up and bowed, beautifully.

Next day, thanks to the cooperation of Mr. Raymond Rohauer, we were able to interview Keaton at the Excelsior Hotel. Several other papers and television networks also had the same idea, and we had to wait a little while. Eventually we saw him peering through a door off the main foyer, apparently wiping down the glass panel with his handkerchief for the benefit of a lady admirer. It was only when he put his head through the space and started cleaning the "glass" from the other side that we realised that it was a beautiful Buster gag.

Keaton started talking almost before we got our equipment ready, and insisted on giving us the most comfortable chairs. He sat bolt upright on the other side of the table, large eyes staring straight ahead, with the Great Stone Face set throughout in expressive immobility except for one charming moment duly noted in the interview. Our questions triggered off an

immediate response, precise down to the last little detail, almost as if his films were parading before him as he talked. And in his mind, Keaton the director seemed quite inseparable from Buster the actor.

J.G.

BUSTER KEATON: I ought to do something about the new release print of *The General* that was shown in London. When the film was to be revived in Europe we brought over as many old prints as we could find, in order to pick out the best reels—to find the ones that hadn't faded, or been chewed up by the machine. We gave them to the outfit in Munich who were handling the film, and they made a duped negative. They did a beautiful job of it. The first thing they wanted to do, as an experiment, was to translate all the English titles into German so that they could release the film in Germany. It did a beautiful business there, so immediately they made some more prints with French titles for release in France. Now they must have lost the original list of English titles, so they put them back again into English from their own German translation.

I happened to see a print of this new English version in Rome last week—the same version you had in London—and the titles are misleading. For instance, when I'm trying to enlist and I'm asked 'What is your occupation?' I say 'bartender'. Well, that type of man gets drafted into the army immediately. In the new version the title reads 'barkeep'—that means you own the place. And it doesn't sound as funny anyway in English: it might in German, I don't know. Then they put 'sir' on to the ends of sentences because I'm talking to an officer, but there's no 'sirring' at all in our titles. Some of the explanatory titles were changed or dropped as well. Do you remember, for instance, the scene where we all got off the train and while we were away the engine was stolen? We actually stopped off there for lunch: the conductor comes into the car and says 'This is Marietta: one hour for lunch.' But they left that title off, and without it you'd think the train had emptied out because it was the end of the run. In which case there's no reason to steal the engine then: they could have waited until everyone had gone and the place was deserted.

J.G.: *Apart from the comedy values, the most impressive thing about all the features you made during the Twenties is their distinctive visual style. They all have a kind of look which one associates with a Keaton film. How did you work with your various co-directors to achieve this? Who actually did what?*

Number one, I was practically my own producer on all those silent pictures. I used a co-director on some of them, but the majority I did alone. And I cut them all myself: I cut all my own pictures.

J.G.: *What exactly would the co-director do?*

Co-direct with me, that's all. He would be out there looking through the camera, and I'd ask him what he thought. He would maybe say 'That scene looks a little slow'; and then I'd do it again and speed it up. As a rule, when I'm working alone, the cameraman, the prop man, the electrician, these are my eyes out there. I'd ask, 'Did that work the way I wanted it to?' and they'd say yes or no. They knew what they were talking about.

J.G.: *You would choose the actual camera set-ups yourself?*

Always, when it was important for the scene I was going to do. If I had an incidental scene—someone runs in, say, and says 'here, you've got to go and do this'—the background wasn't important. Then I generally just told the cameraman that I had these two characters in the scene, two full-length figures, and asked him to pick a good-looking background. He would go by the sun. He'd say, 'I like that back crosslight coming in through the trees. There are clouds over there right now, so if we hurry up we can still get them before they disappear.' So I would say 'Swell' and go and direct the scene in front of the cameraman's set-up. We took pains to get good-looking scenery whenever we possibly could, no matter what we were shooting.

J.G.: *What about the visual idea of the films? Take, for instance, a picture like *Our Hospitality*, which has a beautiful period feeling.*

We were very conscious of our stories. We learned in a hurry that we couldn't make a feature-length picture the way we had done the two-reelers; we couldn't use impossible gags, like the kind of things that happen to cartoon characters. We had to eliminate all these things because we had to tell a logical story that an audience would accept. So story construction became a very strong point with us.

Our Hospitality (1923)

On *Our Hospitality* we had this one idea of an old-fashioned Southern feud. But it looks as though this must have died down in the years it took me to grow up from being a baby, so our best period for that was to go back something like eighty years. 'All right,' we say. 'We go back that far. And now when I go South, am I travelling in a covered wagon, or what? Let's look up the records and see when the first railroad train was invented.' Well, we find out: we've got the Stephenson Rocket for England and the DeWitt Clinton for the United States. And we chose the Rocket engine because it's funnier looking. The passenger coaches were stage coaches with flanged wheels put on them. So we built that entire train and that set our period for us: 1825 was the actual year of the invention of the railroad. Now we dress our people to that period. And that was fine because we liked the costumes; you've got away there from the George Washington short pants and into the more picturesque Johnny Walker type of costume.

J.G.: *One of the best gags in the film is the moment when you swing out by a rope from the river-bank and catch the girl almost in mid-air as she goes over the big waterfall. How did you stage this very tricky shot?*

KEATON IN "THE RAILRODDER", MADE BY GERALD POTTERTON FOR THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA.



We had to build that dam: we built it in order to fit that trick. The set was built over a swimming pool, and we actually put up four eight-inch water pipes, with big pumps and motors to run them, to carry the water up from the pool to create our waterfall. That fall was about six inches deep. A couple of times I swung out underneath there and dropped upside down when I caught her. I had to go down to the doctor right there and then. They pumped out my ears and nostrils and drained me, because when a full volume of water like that comes down and hits you and you're upside down—then you really get it.

J.G.: *How long did it take to shoot the scene? How many takes were there?*

I think I got it on the third take. I missed the first two, but the third one I got it . . . And it's hard to realize that it was shot in 1923. It sounds like going back to ancient history.

J.B.: *But it still works. Two weeks ago in Paris I saw The Three Ages, which is also forty-two years old, and the audience were rolling in the aisles. Presumably you did this as a take-off on films like Intolerance?*

I was thinking of *Intolerance* when I made it. I told the three separate stories the same as Griffith did; and of course in that film I did take liberties, because it was more of a travesty than a burlesque. That's why I used a wristwatch that was a sun-dial, and why I used my helmet the way I did. Fords at that time had a safety device to stop people from stealing the cars: a thing with a big spike which you locked on the back wheel and which looked just like my Roman helmet. So I unlocked my Roman helmet off me and locked it on to the wheel of my chariot. At that time the audience all compared it with the safety gadget for a Ford.

J.B.: *This seems to lead to the question of how you find your gags. Do you get them from the set, things in the decor . . . ?*

Yes, props, and characters, and everything, and then look for the simplest things to go wrong. And that leads to bigger things. But there is nothing worse with us than a misplaced gag. Someone may suggest a good gag, or even an excellent one, but if it doesn't fit the story I'm doing and I try to drag it in, then it looks dragged in on the screen. So it's much better to save it, until some time when it does fit what I'm doing.

J.B.: *Quite often you start off a film rather slowly, and the camera movement increases as the action builds up.*

Deliberately. I always do that. I use the simplest little things in the world, and I never look for big gags to start a picture. I don't want them in the first reel, because if I ever get a big laughing sequence in the first reel, then I'm going to have trouble following it later. The idea that I had to have a gag or get a laugh in every scene . . . I lost that a long time ago. It makes you strive to be funny and you go out of your way trying. It's not a natural thing.

J.G.: *In the short films it was different, of course, because you had to make it funny all the way. Playhouse—the one about the theatre in which you play almost every part—is absolutely packed with jokes. Was it in some ways easier to think up these separate gags for the short films, or did you prefer to have time to work out a story?*

We didn't rush. When we thought we had what we wanted, we went ahead and ordered the sets built. But I made one very bad mistake with that picture *The Playhouse*. I could have made the whole two-reeler just by myself, without any trouble. But we were a little scared to do it, because it might have looked as though we were trying to show how versatile I was—that I could make a whole half-hour picture all alone, without another soul in the cast. That's the reason why we brought other people into the second reel, and that was a mistake.

Seven Chances (1925)

J.B.: *By the time you came to the features, the action was no longer just the basis for the gags but thoroughly integrated with them. Do you consistently look for a gag that will help to advance the action?*

Take one from a picture that I am about to re-release, *The Seven Chances*. I am running away from a batch of women who are chasing me. A friend has put it in the paper that I'll

marry anybody so long as I can be married by five o'clock—it has to do with inheriting an estate or whatever. So all the women in the world show up to get married. They chase me out of the church, and so on. I went down to the dunes just off the Pacific Ocean out at Los Angeles, and I accidentally dislodged a boulder in coming down. All I had set up for the scene was a camera panning with me as I came over the skyline and was chased down into the valley. But I dislodged this rock, and it in turn dislodged two others, and they chased me down the hill.

That's all there was: just three rocks. But the audience at the preview sat up in their seats and expected more. So we went right back and ordered 1,500 rocks built, from bowling alley size up to boulders eight feet in diameter. Then we went out to the Ridge Route, which is in the High Sierras, to a burnt mountain steeper than a forty-five degree angle. A couple of truckloads of men took those rocks up and planted them; and then I went up to the top, and came down with the rocks. That gag gave me the whole final chase, and it was an accident in the first place.

J.G.: *The great thing about that chase is that a lot of it is shot from a long way away, so that you get the effect of the tiny figure with the rocks all round. You often seem to prefer to work within a rather large shot, rather than using a lot of close-ups.*

When I've got a gag that spreads out, I hate to jump a camera into close-ups. So I do everything in the world I can to hold it in that long-shot and keep the action rolling. When I do use cuts I still won't go right into a close-up: I'll just go in maybe to a full figure, but that's about as close as I'll come. Close-ups are too jarring on the screen, and this type of cut can stop an audience from laughing.

If I were going to show you this hotel lobby where we are now, for instance, I'd go back and show you the whole lobby on that first shot, and then move in closer. But the main thing is that I want you to be familiar with the atmosphere, so that you know what my location is and where I am. From then on I never have to go back to the long shot again unless I get into action where I am going to cover space in a hurry.

Steamboat Bill, Jr. (1928)

J.G.: *Could you tell us something about Steamboat Bill Jr., with the big cyclone at the end when you get the impression that the whole set is being systematically destroyed? It must have been one of the most elaborate of all your films to stage.*

The original story I had was about the Mississippi, but we actually used the Sacramento River in California, some six hundred miles north of Los Angeles. We went up there and built that street front, three blocks of it, and built the piers and so on. We found the river boats right there in Sacramento: one was brand new, and we were able to age the other one up to make it look as though it was ready to fall apart. My original situation in that film was a flood. But my so-called producer on that film was Joe Schenck, who at that time was producing Norma Talmadge, Constance Talmadge and myself, and who later became president of United Artists. Then later on 20th Century-Fox was Joe Schenck, and his brother Nicholas Schenck was head man of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Schenck was supposed to be my producer but he never knew when or what I was shooting. He just turned me loose.

Well, the publicity man on *Steamboat Bill* goes to Schenck and he says: 'He can't do a flood sequence because we have floods every year and too many people are lost. It's too painful to get laughs with.' So Schenck told me, 'You can't do a flood.' I said, 'That's funny, since it seems to me that Chaplin during World War One made a picture called *Shoulder Arms*, which was the biggest money-maker he'd made at that time. You can't get a bigger disaster than that, and yet he made his biggest laughing picture out of it.' He said, 'Oh, that's different.' I don't know why it was different. I asked if it was all right to make it a cyclone, and he agreed that was better. Now he didn't know it, but there are four times more people killed in the United States by hurricanes, and cyclones than by floods. But it was all right as long as he didn't find that out, and so I went ahead with my technical man and did the cyclone.



BUSTER KEATON WITH SAMUEL BECKETT (RIGHT) ON THE SET OF "FILM".

J.G.: *How about the technical side? The marvellous shot, for instance, of the front of the building falling on you, so that you are standing in the window as it hits the ground. What were the problems in staging that scene?*

First I had them build the framework of this building and make sure that the hinges were all firm and solid. It was a building with a tall V-shaped roof, so that we could make this window up in the roof exceptionally high. An average second story window would be about 12 feet, but we're up about 18 feet. Then you lay this framework down on the ground, and build the window round me. We built the window so that I had a clearance of two inches on each shoulder, and the top missed my head by two inches and the bottom my heels by two inches. We mark that ground out and drive big nails where my two heels are going to be. Then you put that house back up in position while they finish building it. They put the front on, painted it, and made the jagged edge where it tore away from the main building; and then we went in and fixed the interiors so that you're looking at a house that the front has blown off. Then we put up our wind machines with the big Liberty motors. We had six of them and they are pretty powerful: they could lift a truck right off the road. Now we had to make sure that we were getting our foreground and background wind effect, but that no current ever hit the front of that building when it started to fall, because if the wind warps her she's not going to fall where we want her, and I'm standing right out in front. But it's a one-take scene and we got it that way. You don't do those things twice.

The General (1927)

J.B.: *Your usual method was to start with a story and then look for the gags. Where did you begin with a film like The General?*

I took that first page out of the history book. Disney did it about nine years ago and called it by its original name—*The Great Locomotive Chase*, with Fess Parker. But he made a mistake and told it from a Northerner's standpoint. And you

can always make villains out of the Northerners, but you cannot make a villain out of the South. That was the first mistake he made.

In *The General* I took that page of history and I stuck to it in all detail. I staged it exactly the way it happened. The Union agents intended to enter from the State of Kentucky, which was neutral territory, pretending that they were coming down to fight for the Southern cause. That was an excuse to get on that train which takes them up to an army camp. Their leader took seven men with him, including two locomotive engineers and a telegraph operator; and he told them that if anything went wrong they were to scatter individually, stick to their stories that they were Kentuckians down to enlist in the Southern army, and then watch for the first opportunity to desert and get back over the line to the North. As soon as they stole that engine, they wanted to pull out of there, to disconnect the telegraph and burn bridges and destroy enough track to cripple the Southern army supply route. That was what they intended to do. And I staged the chase exactly the way it happened. Then I rounded out the story of stealing my engine back. When my picture ended the South was winning, which was all right with me.

J.B.: *How did the plot develop apart from the historical story line—the involvement with the girl and so on?*

Well, the moment you give me a locomotive and things like that to play with, as a rule I find some way of getting laughs with it. But the original locomotive chase ended when I found myself in Northern territory and had to desert. From then on it was my invention, in order to get a complete plot. It had nothing to do with the Civil War.

J.G.: *What many of us like about your films is the treatment of the women. These poor ladies, like Marian Mack in The General, are subjected to all kinds of humiliations and yet they battle on. They get pulled and pushed around, but they always stand by you. Did they mind at all?*

No, no. They didn't mind at all. Oh God, that girl in *The General* had more fun with that picture than any film she'd

made in her life. (At this point Keaton's face, hitherto frozen as usual, eased into a wide, knowing smile.) I guess it's because so many leading ladies in those days looked as though they had just walked out of a beauty parlour. They always kept them looking that way—even in covered wagons, they kept their leading ladies looking beautiful at all times. We said to thunder with that, we'll dirty ours up a bit and let them have some rough treatment.

J.B.: *There is a moment of almost pathetic beauty, which is a gag at the same time, when you are both sitting on the steering rod of the wheel and the train starts to move. Not at the very end, but towards the middle of the film.*

I was alone on it when it moved. We were afraid to put her on it, or I would have moved it at the finish.

J.B.: *Can you remember how that gag came to you, out of the film's situation?*

Well, the situation of the picture at that point is that she says 'never speak to me again until you're in uniform.' So the bottom has dropped out of everything, and I've got nothing to do but sit down on my engine and think. I don't know why they rejected me: they didn't tell me it was because they didn't want to take a locomotive engineer off his duty. My fireman wants to put the engine away in the round-house and doesn't know that I'm sitting on the cross bar, and starts to take it in.

I was running that engine myself all through the picture: I could handle that thing so well I was stopping it on a dime. But when it came to this shot I asked the engineer whether we could do it. He said: 'There's only one danger. A fraction too much steam with these old-fashioned engines and the wheel spins. And if it spins it will kill you right then and there.' We

KEATON AND CAT IN "FILM", DIRECTED BY ALAN SCHNEIDER FROM A SCRIPT BY SAMUEL BECKETT.



tried it out four or five times, and in the end the engineer was satisfied that he could handle it. So we went ahead and did it. I wanted a fade-out laugh for that sequence: although it's not a big gag it's cute and funny enough to get me a nice laugh. J.G.: *It's also beautiful: it has another quality than just a laugh. On this question of emotion, there is the difference between your films and those of Chaplin, who sometimes seems to go into a sequence with the intention of milking it for all the emotion it can stand. You are rarely deliberately pathetic. In Go West, however, there is a slight element of conscious pathos. Did you feel you needed something more emotional there than in the other films?*

I was going to do everything I possibly could to keep that cow from being sent to the slaughter-house: I only had that one thing in mind. And I ran into one disappointment on that film. One of the most famous Western shows ever seen in the United States was called 'The Heart of Maryland,' in which these two guys are playing cards, and one guy calls the other a name, and he takes out his six-shooter and lays it down on the table, pointing right at this fellow's middle, and says, 'When you call me that, smile . . .' Well, because I'm known as frozen face, blank pan, we thought that if you did that to me an audience would say, 'Oh my God, he can't smile: he's gone; he's dead.' But it didn't strike an audience as funny at all: they just felt sorry for me. We didn't find that out until the preview, and it put a hole in my scene right there and then. Of course I got out of it the best way I could, but we run into these lulls every now and then.

J.B.: *And you look for a gag to get yourself out of a situation: the pole-vault gag with the spear for instance in The Three Ages. There you were in a situation where you had to get the girl out of the hands of Wallace Beery. How did you work your way to the spear vault from that?*

I couldn't just run over a batch of rocks or something to get to her: I had to invent something, find something unexpected, and pole-vaulting with a spear seemed to be it.

Sherlock Junior (1924)

J.G.: *You very often use gags which couldn't be managed except in films. For instance the scene in Sherlock Jr. where you are dreaming yourself into the picture, and the scenery keeps changing. How did you get the idea of this scene?*

That was the reason for making the whole picture. Just that one situation: that a motion picture projectionist in a theatre goes to sleep and visualises himself getting mixed up with the characters on the screen. All right, then my job was to transform those characters on the screen into my (the projectionist's) characters at home, and then I've got my plot. Now to make it work was another thing; and after that picture was made every cameraman in Hollywood spent more than one night watching it and trying to figure out just how we got some of those scenes.

J.G.: *How did you actually do the sequence where you are near a tree, and then you are on a rock in the middle of the ocean. Was it some kind of back projection?*

No, that hadn't been invented then. We call it processing, but back projection is correct. But it hadn't been invented. We used measuring instruments for that sequence. When I stood on that rock I was going to jump into the ocean, but as I jumped the sea changed to something else. As I looked down I held still for a moment, and we ended that scene. Then we brought out tape-measures, put a cross-bar in front of the camera to square it off, and measured me from two angles. That made sure that I was in exactly the same spot as far as the camera was concerned. We also used surveyor's instruments to get me the same height, so that when we changed the scene and I went back on the set I was in exactly the same place as in the first shot. Then the cameraman just starts to crank and I jump; and when I jump I hit something else. I don't remember what I hit, but I hit something. This was all done just by changing the sets. But I on the screen never changed.

Text transcribed and edited from a tape-recording.

RAY'S



CHARULATA

Penelope Houston

THE NAME ITSELF IS ELUSIVE. Not Ray, but something between Rye and Roy; not Sat-y-a-jit, with the syllables neatly separated as in a child's reading-book, but something closer to Shotachit. It's a critical disadvantage to admire a director's work immensely and to know that one can never quite come to terms with pronouncing his name. And to come precisely to terms with his style, so elusive yet so direct, so flexible and yet so classically strict, so absorbent and yet so expansive, is hardly any easier. "One is left—for all the world like one more MacMahonist—gasping inarticulately: beauty, tenderness, lyricism," wrote Richard Roud of *Charulata* in the *Autumn SIGHT AND SOUND*.

Beauty, tenderness, lyricism; but also a rigorous discipline. There is a characteristic Ray scene—perhaps the characteristic Ray scene. A shadowed interior, shuttered against the sun; rooms rather large and cluttered, with the sounds of birds or animals just penetrating the walls; two people, arriving at some moment of discovery about themselves, caught in an instant of absorbed silence. Nothing is going to be said, because emotionally we are still in a climate of Victorian reticence. Writers as far apart as Henry James and Chekhov have known the power of such moments, when the tension (not necessarily sexual tension; it can take other forms) builds up against the safety-valve of social convention, and the suspense is in the unbreakable silence. It's a tension which relatively few Western film-makers can use in quite this way, because we no longer live in that society. Seeing a film like *Charulata*, though, I'm reminded of Edith Wharton's comment on the clash between the new novelists (new novelists now of forty years ago) who were "so put to it to find new horrors in

the domestic circle," and the writers of her own day. "It was certainly easier [for us]; for the abysses, which were always so shallow, have grown even more so, now that they are on the itinerary of all the luxury cruisers."

To attempt to annex Satyajit Ray as the last Victorian would be absurd. But it isn't merely because *Charulata* is set in 1880, and full of references to Gladstone and Macaulay, to English politics and the rotundities of nineteenth century leader writers, that one is made aware of the connections. The film brings together the two characters who seem most thoroughly to arouse Ray's sympathies, and who have appeared most persistently in his films. And neither of them is, in Western terms, quite of the present day.

Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee), the literary-minded cousin who awakens Charu, the editor-publisher's wife, from the lethargy of the long Indian afternoons, is a variation on Ray's eternal student. Apu, declaiming his poetry to the night or the river, both the young men in *Two Daughters*, the boy in *Kanchenjunga*, the husband in *Devi*, are all recognisably of the same type: Trofimov in a ragged dhoti. They believe passionately but indeterminately in the power of words; they tend to play at real situations as though they had encountered them in a novel, so that they seldom manage quite to grasp what is really happening, until they find that while they were thinking of literature life has crept up on them. Faced with demands from life, their first reaction is to run back to literature. No film-maker has ever been more conscious of the insidious fascination of books—or of the necessity to read and write. As Amal covers the pages of the notebook which Charu has prettily bound for him, or Charu herself sits stubbornly



MADHABI MUKHERJEE.

glowering at her own blotted manuscript, Ray makes one aware not of 'writing' as an abstraction, but of the texture of the Bengali script on paper. Learning to read (Apu teaching his wife, the post-master teaching the little girl in *Two Daughters*) is like falling in love.

The second Ray character is the New Woman—and she deserves those Victorian capital letters. Does Charu herself have an improbably large freedom, when one remembers that decades later, at the time of *A Passage to India*, the Indian woman was still locked in purdah? I don't know, although one Indian critic, writing of the film in relation to the Tagore novel from which it is adapted, does suggest that Ray's Charu, played with charm and a touch of steel by Madhabi Mukherjee, is of a stronger and more independent spirit. In any case, she is very closely related to the heroine of *Mahanagar*, his preceding film. There the setting is modern, and the girl finds herself forced into unwilling competition with her husband: taking a job, and discovering that she actually enjoys it. *Mahanagar* conveys a good deal of this through such engagingly trivial details as the girl's way of eating her breakfast: first picking tentatively at a few scraps, a little shy of breaking the custom that husband and wife eat apart; later, once established in her own mind as a wage-earner, wolfing down great platefuls of food.

Ray's women characters in themselves sum up a range of historical attitudes. The poor little wife in *Devi* is tradition personified: quietly submissive, classically patient, she is trapped into her appalling role of goddess. In *The World of Apu*, the wife is still submissive, though her docility is tempered by self-discovery; in *Two Daughters* the taming of the village tomboy is a contest between equals, largely because of the student's inadequacies as Petruchio; in *Kanchenjunga* the women are more modern, and have acquired the boredom of

sophistication. And in *Mahanagar* the heroine is right out of the chrysalis. *Charulata* may look backwards in time, but the heroine herself is the most completely realised of all Ray's women. The wife in *Mahanagar* finds herself in a situation which her personality must expand to meet. Charu, however, is like an Ibsen heroine in that she knows too much about the sources of her own discontent.

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Charu is first seen in one of her long afternoons of boredom: wandering around the shuttered rooms, calling pettishly to a servant, fingering a book, fetching her opera glasses (in a swish of skirts and movement which will be echoed later when she marches through the house with her first published article), to peep through the shutters at a passer-by. For a moment, this portly stranger fills the empty horizon. Her husband (Sailen Mukherjee) is preoccupied with his politics and his paper, *The Sentinel*. It's his real devotion to Charu, however, that brings catastrophe upon them. First, so that she can have her sister-in-law's companionship, he brings in her brother to manage *The Sentinel*; and the brother robs him. (The nature of the companionship is shown in a charmingly silly card-game, won by indolent Charu while Manda, cross-eyed with determination, is boasting of her own will-power over the cards.) Secondly, he invites his cousin Amal to entertain Charu with the literary talk which he can't himself be bothered with; and out of this companionship comes Charu's undeclared love for Amal.

Even here, though, it's not so much love for Amal himself as for a dream Amal—a dream summed up in the sequence where Amal lies writing on the ground, while Charu floats backwards and forwards above him in a swing. Timed by the lazy movements of the swing, the sequence is taken beyond the simply lyrical by Ray's suggestion that each character is unconsciously using the other as a feature in his own romantic landscape.

One little sequence shows Ray's sidelong humour in alliance with his ability to hold a scene balanced on a knife-edge between its players. Amal has the chance to marry a rich girl and go to England. Bhupati, Charu's husband, is fired to a wonderful vision of what his own life in England might have been: grandly oblivious of the real Amal's staggering unfitness for the role, he sees him as "Young Bengal", striding down Whitehall with a rolled umbrella, dazzling the Liberal politicians on whom (in 1880) intellectual Indians think their future depends. Amal, meanwhile, has his own dreamy vision—Byron, the Mediterranean, a fantasy of poetic encounters. And Charu, standing slightly apart and knowing perfectly well that Amal, whatever he may say, is going to take this chance, sees her own future without him.

Throughout this section of the film, there is a mixture of playfulness and high seriousness which seems to me extraordinarily to echo early E. M. Forster—not the Forster of *A Passage to India*, but rather of the short stories and of novels like *A Room with a View*. Amal bursts into the house in a gale of wind, nature providing the appropriate danger signal as it does with some of Forster's cheerful pagans. He frisks about between Charu and her silly sister-in-law, laughs at them as Progressive Woman and Reactionary Woman, infuriates Charu by showing that he doesn't rate her literary opinions much above those of Reactionary Woman. Clumsy and conceited, tiring and amiable, he is very like one of Forster's young men; and it wouldn't be too difficult to imagine Charu, with her excess of sensibility, wondering what to make of Howard's End. Is this the strictly Indian Ray, giving us entirely Indian characters? Or is he consciously or unconsciously admitting Western literary influences, and creating the spirit of early Bloomsbury in Calcutta, 1880? I don't know enough about India even to guess the answer, but I find the puzzle fascinating.

Meanwhile, the more solidly Victorian element of the plot is beginning to take hold. Bhupati learns of his brother-in-law's theft, and makes it clear to his wife and cousin that what he finds agonising is not the loss of money but the act of treachery. Pulled up short on the edge of another betrayal, Amal goes away—to marry his heiress. Bhupati takes Charu

AMAL WITH THE TWO SISTERS-IN-LAW.



off for a seaside holiday; and on the empty beach (a remote echo here of *The Lady with the Little Dog*) they plan a new paper, in which Charu will have a share. Then, shatteringly, Bhupati discovers Charu's feelings for Amal. The film ends on a gesture of reconciliation: the hands stretch out towards each other, but before they touch Ray freezes the shot. He ends his film on calm still images: the corridors and galleries of the house; the servant standing by; the hands not quite touching. The moment is tentative and incomplete, the shots frozen to suggest not finality but possibility.

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Some people have complained that the last sequences tip over too far into melodrama. The brother-in-law is too obviously a shady character; a storm blows up at the inevitable moment; the paper-merchant from whom Bhupati learns about the theft is played with Dickensian relish. It seems to me, however, that Ray has been adroit here in preparing his ground. All through the film, one has kept an awareness of the Victorian scene at the back of one's mind. The house, splendidly wall-papered and furnished with staid European sofas on which no one ever thinks of sitting, is a conscious compromise between Eastern grace and Western decorum. But in the last scenes Charu also has a high Victorian collar under her sari; Bhupati is strapped into a tight jacket. They look sterner and more formal; Victorians as well as Indians, caught up in a situation which knocks the props from under their ordered confidence. Beneath the shallows stretches the Jamesian abyss of betrayal.

It's impossible to tell how far this is an intentional effect and how far a happy accident. And it's impossible to gauge the full degree of intention behind Ray's many English references, here and in other films. Offhand, I can only remember one actual appearance by the English in a Ray film—the tourists who stroll about the hotel grounds in *Kanchenjunga*. This film, which I've seen only once and in a version without subtitles, is set in British India, in one of those hill stations which (as Malcolm Muggeridge discovered in his *Twilight of Empire*) remains forever Cheltenham. The military band plays at teatime; the industrialist, trying to rouse the young student's ambitions, talks of hitting sixes over the pavilion; an optimistic bird watcher scrabbles about the hillside; a bar of Cadbury's chocolate is handed over as a token of love.

Like the echoes of Western music, or the bold military barks of the madman in *Two Daughters*, such references need to be approached with a certain caution. An English audience cannot but find them seductively charming; which may not be entirely the intention. The Viceroys have gone, leaving behind this slightly preposterous jumble of music and milk chocolate. In *Charulata* a fascinating use is made of the two languages. English is the language of politics, and Bhupati in his office thinks English and writes English, rolling out for *The Sentinel* leaders which celebrate the victories of Gladstonian Liberalism. Charu herself is entirely of Bengal. When she comes to write, Ray flashes on to the screen a momentary evocation of the village in which she grew up, with its river, turning water-wheels, and bare, white landscape. Even for Progressive Woman, identity has to be tracked back into the past.

The unresolved theme of old and new is of course an endlessly recurring one: from the first shots of the train in *Pather Panchali*, through *Jalsaghar*, with the old nobleman shoring up his palace against the inroads of the new men, and *Devi*, with its painful victory of superstition, to *Mahanagar* and *Charulata*. *Mahanagar* ultimately fails because it comes near to making a De Sica statement rather than allowing a situation to expand of itself. Towards the end of the film, the wife is busy selling her sewing-machines, and the husband is out of work. She defends an Anglo-Indian colleague against her employer (previously seen as rather an amiable man, he's now lit crudely from below in a manner too reminiscent of Soviet comments on capitalism), and loses her own job. Together, husband and wife walk off into the city crowd.

The ending of *Mahanagar* is generalised and sentimental: a flurry of plot to be got through, overtones of melodrama,



CONVERSATION ON THE BEACH: CHARU AND BHUPATI.

and then a final shot which echoes too many scenes of little people lost in a big city. By contrast, the conclusion of *Charulata* is exact, particular, and beautiful: an ending which brings the film safely through a couple of melodramatic incidents and out on the other side. This time nothing is implied or imposed: the film stops where it must. In fact, there's a case for *Charulata* as the surest of all Ray's films in its emotional touch. Certainty about atmosphere he has always had, but in the past he has sometimes faltered over plot. His most successful films have been those like *Pather Panchali*, *Two Daughters* or *Jalsaghar*, in which what storyline there is can be carried atmospherically. *Mahanagar* fumbles its plot, and almost drops it. *Charulata* is only deceptive in that its story looks simple.

Critics of what are usually called the humanist directors complain that they try to make us share a common experience ("universalise" it) by over-simplification. I don't think this has ever been true of Ray, and in *Charulata* the interplay of sophistication and simplicity is extraordinary. The whole small business of Charu's literary competition with Amal, for instance, and the impulses of jealousy, crossness, obstinacy and love which work on her, is very subtle indeed. Her feeling that Amal is writing in her notebook, and for her, in those long afternoons by the swing; her irritation when Amal jokingly asks the sister-in-law what magazine to send his story to; everyone's annoyance when Amal bounds in at precisely the wrong moment with the ice-cream that is to celebrate publication, and has to fling his sweetmeats to the cat: out of half-a-dozen such incidents emerges a motive which isn't apparent to Charu herself. But the incidents are never enough in themselves to break the film's even flow. Nothing, in any direct narrative sense, has happened.

People have said, as they usually do of a Ray film, that *Charulata* is slow. "Full of unpregnant pauses," wrote Kenneth Tynan, in a review which damned with the remotest of praise. Certainly there are moments when nothing in particular happens, and the camera goes tracking down the corridors, or pauses in a kind of visual yawn at the cool, shaded emptiness. This isn't the impatient existentialist boredom of the West, but an expression of a world which has stopped waiting for something to happen: part of the large lethargy of India. "This restfulness of gesture is the peace that passeth understanding. . . . When the whirring of action ceases it becomes visible, and reveals a civilisation which the West can disturb but will never acquire. The hand stretches out for ever, the lifted knee has the eternity though not the sadness of the grave . . ." Forster, of course, in the novel one still hopes Ray may one day be able to film. As Forster had to confront India, so it seems that Ray must sooner or later confront England. Where better than among the echoes of the Marabar Caves?

STAR-CROSSED IN PRAGUE

Peter John Dyer



SOLDIERS' EVENING OUT IN "A BLONDE IN LOVE".

DIRECTORS CANNOT BE RELIED UPON to look and sound like the films which they make. Milos Forman, who with two Czech films has made much the same quiet impact as Olmi did a few years ago, can. There's no good reason why one should expect him to live up to the image which his films create. It is simply interesting that—having lunch with him, hearing him introduce his latest film at the London Film Festival—his personality confirms one's feeling about his work. He has a puckish wit and a puckish love of pulling strings, like some benevolent puppet-master. Now that Central European directors of Shakespeare are all the rage, one would love to see him bring his fresh modern eye to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The ingredients seem tailor-made: mechanicals, star-crossed lovers, Oberon the supreme puppet-master and Pucholt playing Puck (obviously).

Peter and Pavla and *A Blonde in Love* are about the same things: adolescent difficulties with the other sex, a tangle of cross-purposes between boys and their parents, the dissatisfaction and search for identity suffered by only ordinarily intelligent boys and girls in soul-destroying jobs. Forman also has a love-hate (though in fact the term is misleadingly extreme) feeling about dance-halls. This is one of the characteristics which has led to the inevitable comparison with Olmi.

I think there is a closer link with the early films of another director, the English (but like Forman Czech-born) Karel Reisz. *Mamma Don't Allow* was one of the first films I can recall to take a close, quizzical look at teenagers' dancing habits. Much of *We Are the Lambeth Boys* commented on the deadly monotony of so many factory and office jobs. However, it is doubtful if Forman would recognise any deeper affinity than that. His two films are not confined within documentary disciplines; and his use of amateur actors is bound to be more fruitful than that of anybody filming the English at work and play.

There is a difference of tone, of emphasis, too. Karel Reisz once said to me, apropos of my strictures on a proselytising critic bludgeoning some harmless little muddle-headed film,

"You're right. One can't be serious all the time." Yet his own films, springing from a Free Cinema climate of protest and scorn, were and indeed then had to be openly committed to Left Wing didacticism. Forman, on the other hand, prefers to let his generalised social comments find their own way through situations that are presented in the particular, and characters that are amusingly semi-articulate.

For Forman, gently poked fun is the thing. This could be due to working in a nationalised film industry where criticism is safer the more general it is. But I doubt if this is the case. There is evidence, in the films and in Forman's own conversation, that he is doing exactly what he wants to do. Certainly his concerns are serious ones: about kids who don't know what they want to be and whether or not they should have sex; about parents whose attitude is one of nagging, irascible bewilderment. But there is a hint of autobiography in Forman's concern (the problems are so commonplace there couldn't help but be), coupled with a wry determination not to take himself too seriously. His own conversation comes remarkably close in tone to that of his characters. Conscious that he has nonplussed a London audience by getting excited, in halting English, about the idea of filming Jesus Christ at the time He lived, he suddenly ends his speech by observing brightly: "Hasn't the weather been terrible lately?"

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In *Peter and Pavla*, the spotlight is on the boy, a seventeen-year-old trainee in a supermarket. The humour springs from the particularity of his job, and his singular unsuitability for it. A shy, somewhat abstracted youth of limited intelligence, he is of all things a store detective. But this is by no means the sum of his problems. He is obsessively worried about sex and his own virginity; he can't do the twist; his time off with the slightly bored, slightly provocative Pavla is ruined by the ever-present Cenda (Vladimir Pucholt), a skinny and often tipsy young labourer who persistently reads offence into the intonation of the word "Hello"; his mother barrages him with questions about his love life; and his father is given to endless,

rambling lectures in his braces, punctuated by turns up and down the living-room and the massage of an ample chest.

Like an expert juggler, Forman keeps all these themes running throughout his film. The narrative structure is fragmentary, composed of minutely observed details and a great deal of improvised dialogue. Forman is a master of the verbal and mental hiatus, of the comically strained pause for thought connecting truism with banality, and banality with some magnificently conceived non-sequitur. One cannot avoid quoting the film's already oft-quoted ending. To Peter's chagrin, Cenda and his mate barge in during one of his father's lectures. Their arrival encourages Peter's father (the formidable Jan Ostrcil) to embark on odious comparisons and homilies about hands blessed by honest toil. Out of his depth, Cenda brightly informs Peter's father that he has found the discussion "interesting." The word, though quite innocently snatched out of Cenda's shallow consciousness, strikes Peter's father as the height of impertinent inadequacy when applied to the insoluble problem (as he sees it) of a shiftless son. Failure of communication is complete on all sides, and the film ends on a frozen shot of the father's utter bewilderment.

This shot is the core of the film, what it has been informally leading up to. It is a perfectly ordinary terminus, the end of a relaxed and impressionistic journey through one stratum of working-class life today, and had it been unsupported by some focal narrative thread one's interest might well have flagged. That it doesn't is due to the brainwave of setting so much of the action in a supermarket. Peter's job as a store detective turns the film into an affectionate comedy of embarrassment in which we all become voyeurs as willing as he is unwilling. There is the sinister suspect whom Peter tails through the town without having the courage to go up to him. The comedy is heightened by our understanding that Peter knows perfectly well he has no intention of challenging the man. (Later it turns out that he is a friend of the manager.)

But the highlight, almost cathartic in its relief after all those shots of hands feeling and prodding each and every product, is the great occasion when a woman suddenly steals something, then something else, indulging in an orgy of petty theft that leaves her shopping bag bulging as widely as Peter's eyes. True to form, Peter fails to make his move. Anything as violent as an actual nab would be as alien to Peter's timidity as to Forman's way of looking at life.

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A Blonde in Love covers similar territory from a different, mainly feminine outlook. The heroine, a budding Czech Jeanne Moreau called Hana Brejchova, works in a factory and lives in a hostel. Vulnerably romantic, she gets picked up by a young jazz musician (Vladimir Pucholt). To her the night they spend together is the start of something precious. The boy, however, is still at the experimental stage, and he is utterly out of his depth when he comes home one evening to find that the girl has called to see him. His mother is appalled by the situation, delivering harangues as endless as those of the father in the previous film. Nagging curiosity (Forman's mothers are boundlessly curious and pessimistic) gives way to a curbed smile of hospitality, which in turn is quickly wrenched into a censorious inquisition.

The girl is put to bed in the boy's room, the mother drags him out to share the parental bed, and voices are querulously raised. There is a brilliantly timed switch of feeling here, with the audience relishing the prolonged, almost vaudevillian antics of the disrupted family and the girl listening outside and shaking. For a moment one imagines she must be laughing too, till a closer look reveals that she is sobbing bitterly. Silent sympathy overtakes the audience, a miraculous piece of mood-manoeuvre, and the scene quickly fades.

Again, the narrative is deceptively casual, zigzagging about to accommodate a number of comic set-pieces, but always coming back to the girl and her generous idealism, confiding to a friend that all is whiter than white where her current romance is concerned. In between, we get gently cutting glimpses of well-meaning adults, like the lady welfare officer in the hostel putting moral purity to the vote and gaining bland satisfaction from a herdlike show of hands.

Forman's view of hearty, well-meaning bullies and their obedient creatures, exemplified in a long, brilliantly worked out dance-hall scene involving three soldiers and the retrieving of a bottle of wine sent to the wrong table, is always gentle, never overtly critical. He respects people's shyness like no other director; and he sees the puzzled insecurity behind each show of self-assertion, as in the scene where a discarded boy friend argues his rights before the girl's hostel companions.

To be so scrupulous about the feelings of his characters, Forman resorts to a less scrupulous form of deployment in order patiently to achieve his ends. He leaves his actors pretty much in the dark about the plot, the theme, the characters they are playing. The father in *Peter and Pavla*, he told me, saw the film as some sort of tragedy; the boys found the film's situations irresistibly comic.

An apparently unique aspect of Forman's use of amateur actors, like the father in *Peter and Pavla*, is the exhaustive length given to any take featuring improvised speeches. The actor eventually grinds to a halt—more than likely there has been a mental block—yet Forman's camera keeps on turning. It's rather like watching a chain-smoker work his way through two cigarettes, with the camera giving special attention to the lighting of the second cigarette from the first. This metaphorical lighting of a second cigarette, in fact a signal of anguished mental effort, is accompanied by a grim, unchanging expression of almost bovine concentration which is for the audience a source of unfailing comic pleasure. Much the same technique is used in the dance-hall sequence in *A Blonde in Love*. As the three bored, unwilling soldiers try to work up a synthetic interest in the local girls, the camera fixes a beady eye on their every indication of discomfort. It is difficult to say or even guess how much rehearsal goes into setting up such a scene. But once set up, there is no cheating the audience. The ball of wool slowly, expansively unrolls, rather as in that famous practical joke sequence in a Swiss hotel in Hitchcock's first *Man Who Knew Too Much*.

I think the secret of Forman's success lies in his self-awareness, his ability to respect and at the same time deploy the reluctance, intensity and bewilderment of the people he works with. One last story sums up what I mean. Commiserating with him on his return home to do his annual military service, we tentatively enquired whether it wasn't perhaps a rather boring intrusion into his professional life. Forman disagreed. How could it possibly be boring, when he spent most of his time relieving the boredom of his fellow reservists by recounting fictitious meetings with innumerable glamorous screen stars?

VLADIMIR PUCHOLT IN "PETER AND PAVLA".





THE MEXICAN BUNUEL

Tom Milne



"It would have been more interesting if I could have made a different ending"—Buñuel on "*Susana*."

"It's no good"—Buñuel on "*Abismos de Pasión*."

TEN YEARS AGO one might perhaps have been more ready to pay heed to Buñuel's casual dismissal of much of his own work; but as the early Mexican quickies gradually filter through to Europe, it becomes increasingly obvious that one simply cannot afford to overlook anything he has made. Even *El Rio y la Muerte* (1954), with its Dr. Kildare hero and its "seven deaths, four burials and I don't know how many funeral vigils," contains a superb central sequence, and has Buñuel's signature appended throughout to make insidious mockery of the script's naive message about the benefits of civilisation. And the ending of *Susana*, about which Buñuel is so cavalier, turns out to be one of his neatest exercises in poker-faced irony.

Here, though unimpeachably satisfying commercial demands for a conclusion both happy and moral, Buñuel has produced something as ambiguous in theory and unmistakable in fact as the celebrated last sequence of *Nazarin*. Just as *Susana*'s lascivious efforts to disrupt a bourgeois household are about to come to fruition, with father, mother and son at daggers drawn over her, a *deus ex machina* arrives to drag her back to her reformatory. The family honour is saved, and Buñuel opens his epilogue with shots of a tranquil sky, of ducks and goats being shepherded across the now peaceful hacienda. Reconciliation comes to the embarrassed family as they sit down at the dinner-table, and while she happily serves her reunited masters, the faithful old servant Feliza closes the film by muttering a tag line which is roughly the Mexican equivalent of "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." One cannot help but recall the well-bred dinner-guests of *L'Age d'Or*, scandalised when Gaston Modot slaps a lady but hardly batting an eyelid when the gamekeeper irritably shoots his little son like a rabbit: the conventions have been preserved, and the family in *Susana* smile fondly at each other, making contented nods to heaven, while the abyss of desire opened up by *Susana* still yawns beside them. What, one wonders, is the "more interesting" denouement Buñuel would have liked?

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There is no question but that Buñuel had to accept limitations in all his early Mexican films, with the exception (relatively speaking) of *Los Olvidados*. The scripts are often melodramatic and scrappily put together, the acting indifferent, and most of the films have obviously been made on very rapid schedules and tight budgets. But such limitations have never bothered him much. *L'Age d'Or* is not the best acted film in the world (nor, for that matter, is *Nazarin* or even *Viridiana*). *Simon del Desierto* is no less masterly than the masterpieces which preceded it for all its obviously restricted budget. The faltering scripts of the opening reels of *El* and *Nazarin* are hardly worth mentioning. The lamentable acting in *Abismos de Pasión* doesn't prevent it from being a much more faithful interpretation of Emily Bronte than Wyler's polished and stylishly acted *Wuthering Heights*. And in *Subida al Cielo*, the glee with which Buñuel juxtaposes shots of real and model buses (emphasising the discrepancy by making the model climb an incline at least twice as steep as the real hill), defies criticism. As always with Buñuel, what matters is the wit and bite with which he says what he wants to say—

"With *El*, I followed my usual course in Mexico; I was offered a film, and instead of accepting something completely ordinary I tried to make a counter-offer—something which, though it's still commercial, looks more propitious for expressing some of the things that interest me."

—and he almost always manages to say it.

El (1952) is now accepted as one of Buñuel's masterpieces. *Susana* (1950), though it never reaches quite the same heights of invention, deserves to be placed on the same level. It may have no answer to the later film's stunning imagery of paroxysmal jealousy—Francisco sitting alone on the staircase of the dark house, madly rattling a stair-rod against the banisters, or creeping into his wife's bedroom for a sinister operation with needle, thread, razor-blade and chloroform—but in compensation it has a greater overall consistency in expounding its theme.

El tends to move from peak to peak, so that the process by which Francisco turns from pillar of society into monster of jealousy is never shown. Linking the marvellously erotic opening sequence in church, where Francisco's attention wanders from the feet being bathed and kissed by the priest to the troubling vision of Gloria's shapely legs, and the honeymoon sequence in which he jabs a knitting-needle through the keyhole to chastise an imaginary interloper, there is really only a perfunctory scene in the railway compartment when Francisco's happiness is clouded by first glimmerings of doubt. Buñuel is not so much interested in the why or how of his jealous rage, as in the what: what form will it take, and to what lengths will it go?

In *Susana*, the arrival of a pretty, unprincipled bitch among a bourgeois family will obviously cause chaos, and Buñuel details with meticulous delight exactly how it happens. The film begins, as it ends, with a malicious backhander at the Church. Thrown into a cell at the reformatory among the rats and bats, *Susana* rages helplessly until she notices the moonlight against the barred window throwing a cross on the floor. When she hurls herself at the window, her prayer ("O Just God, perform a miracle! Deliver me!") is answered, and the bars come away in her hand so that she escapes into the stormy night. She arrives at the ranch as an object of pity, wet, bedraggled, scratched and tearful; and the family rises to the bait (cf. Buñuel's hatred of the blind, traditional objects of pity, in *L'Age d'Or*, *Los Olvidados*, *Viridiana* and elsewhere). Fed a bowl of soup and solicitously mothered with a shawl by the old servant, *Susana* submits until Feliza leaves the room, then hurls it away to snuggle ecstatically down between the snowy sheets. "She is so humble, so innocent," exclaims the mother next morning, as *Susana* makes a demure appearance in a fresh print dress, tripping off with an egg-basket to the barn where she will tempt the ranch foreman, Jesus, into a frenzy of desire.

Susana literally assaults the calm surface of life on the ranch, and one of Buñuel's nicest inventions is the way she shrugs her dress down off-the-shoulder every time she is about to accost a male member of the household. Repeated again and again throughout the film, this gesture becomes much more than the cliché it usually is: *Susana* flaunts her sexuality, and her bare shoulders become like a banner proudly flown as a call to revolt. In their own way, Jesus and young Alberto (the son) take up the challenge: Jesus sweeps her promptly off to a pile of hay in the barn, and Alberto accidentally falls into a clumsily passionate embrace when the ladder on which she is helping him to arrange his books falls over. But they are both trapped by convention—Alberto by fear of his father, Jesus by fear of his master—and the hapless Jesus is banished from the farm, while Alberto stares longingly out through the bars which block his window.

Susana comes nearest to victory with the father, Guadalupe, whose defences are stronger because he is the convention to be overthrown. And when Guadalupe finally succumbs, the women revert to the jungle: the wife grabs a rawhide whip and beats the interloper with sadistic glee, while *Susana* grabs a sickle to attack the female making a last ditch defence of her home and family. The gradual subversion of Guadalupe is beautifully observed, linking his relationship to both women. He watches *Susana* with paternal approval as she walks demurely past, and turns to kiss his wife with a sudden passion which surprises them both: "It's so hot," he mutters apologetically, fanning himself with his hat. He stares with troubled pleasure as *Susana* perches in his gun-cupboard caressingly polishing the windows, then tells his wife that the girl should wear less revealing dresses. He longingly inhales the scent of

the handkerchief she has dropped and snaps with irritated incomprehension at his wife when she innocently questions him about it. And when he finally embraces Susana so that their love is out in the open, he asks her to leave him and sinks wearily down with his head in his hands as though, both delighted and frightened by what has happened, he seeks the security of his own chair.

There is, of course, a strong element of parody in this film, which carries its typically Mexican situation to absurd lengths, notably in the scenes where the light from Susana's little window shines out like a beacon over the quiet courtyard, while father and son stare hungrily from their respective windows, and Jesus lurks outside in the darkness behind a tree. But even in the obviously pruned version shown at the National Film Theatre (the scene has gone in which Susana sensuously allows egg-yolks to stream over her legs, and something is missing from the sequence with Alberto in the well), it has an erotic attack which cuts deep. The irrepressible sexual urge which society was doing its best to repress throughout *L'Age d'Or* reappears again in *Susana*, more naked and unashamed than in any other Buñuel film.

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Curiously enough, the three main recurring themes in Buñuel's work, which were all adumbrated in *L'Age d'Or*—sex, politics, the church—each dominate a different period in his career, though naturally there are exceptions and some overlapping. Sex, perhaps because the Mexican commercial scene took to it like a duck to water, is the mainspring of the early films from 1950–1955. Politics makes its reappearance with the trio of somewhat underestimated Franco-Mexican productions, *Cela s'appelle l'Aurore*, *La Mort en ce Jardin* and *La Fièvre monte à El Pao*, made in 1956–1957 (greater sophistication of the French participants, permitting more detailed philosophical concepts and more “literary” scripts?). And religion, of course, is relentlessly excoriated in the sequence of master-works stretching from *Nazarin* to *Simon del Desierto*, by way of Célestine and her Diary (Buñuel having reached a position of unassailable authority and liberty of expression?).

The surrealist concept of *l'amour fou* is examined from all angles in these early films: love as paroxysm, whether in provocation (*Susana*), perversion (*Archibaldo de la Cruz*) or jealousy (*El*). Even a film like *Los Olvidados*, ostensibly a tract about juvenile delinquency, is powered by its erotic imagery, while the light-hearted *Subida al Cielo* has at its centre a darker sequence in which the hero on his wedding-night spends a

nuît de folie adrift in a mountain-top storm with a luxuriantly seductive tart.

Subida al Cielo (1951) is a cheerfully insouciant film with an informal story, about a young man who has to make a long bus journey on his wedding-night to fetch a lawyer to attend to his dying mother's will, which allows a bizarre collection of characters complete freedom to disappear after doing their party piece. It looks exactly as though it had been made off the cuff, so that superb moments like the river crossing where the bus, rescuing tractor and team of oxen all get stuck, and the ensuing frenzy is resolved by a tiny girl who casually leads the oxen out on the end of a piece of string, rub shoulders with crude Latin comedy.

The main trouble, perhaps, is that the brief but tempestuous love affair in the bus obviously interested Buñuel more than anything else, and it is done with such gusto that it tends to overbalance the film. *L'amour fou* again, as Oliverio imagines himself making love to the accompaniment of an orchestra in a dream bus overgrown with foliage, and actually fulfils his dream in a real bus perched on top of the world miles from anywhere while the storm rages outside. In Oliverio's dream, his wife floats neglected in the water in her wedding-gown, but when he returns to reality after his joyous interlude on the mountain he is happy to be reunited with her. In theory, at least: Buñuel is obviously so little interested in the wife that she remains a sketchy, pallid figure. The implication, possibly unintentional, that with her Oliverio will never recapture his brief experience of passion, is never really clinched. The whole film, in fact, is rather left up in the air.

El Bruto, made in 1952 between *Subida al Cielo* and *El*, is an interesting but only intermittently successful first attempt to document one human being's gradual perception of the humanity of another, which was afterwards so delicately done in *Robinson Crusoe* in the relationship between Crusoe and Friday. Tony Richardson, in an article written in *SIGHT AND SOUND* in 1954 before he had seen *El Bruto*, commented: “the stills . . . with black cockerels and seduction among the carcasses hanging in a butcher's shop, look characteristic, and a poster has the intriguing description ‘fascinatingly bestial’.”

Buñuel is in fact surprisingly reticent in his use of the slaughter-house setting, and in a way this is really the weakness of the film: it isn't outrageous enough. *El Bruto*, the hired assassin from the slaughter-house who suddenly falls in love with an innocent young girl, doesn't draw her into his natural habitat: instead he comes to her, and probably because Pedro Armendariz is miscast in the central role, he does not bring the odour of the slaughter-house with him. The result is simply a beauty and the beast affair, which starts promisingly enough with her extracting an enormous nail embedded in his shoulder, but progresses according to romantic convention, with none of the wit and subtlety of *Robinson Crusoe*. All the social conscience stuff at the beginning (*El Bruto* acts as strong-arm man for a property owner determined to oust his poor tenants, including the girl and her father, from their homes) is very perfunctorily done; and much of the detail (the elderly property owner's home life with his lecherous mistress Paloma and ancient leprechaun of a father) is oddly drawn from Buñuel's lighter mood, so that the suddenly threatening appearance of the black cockerel which terrifies Paloma after she has betrayed *El Bruto*, seems like imagery belonging to another film.

What is missing is precisely the feeling that *El Bruto*'s new love is a paroxysm leading just as inevitably to his death as does that of Alejandro and Catalina (Heathcliff and Cathy) in *Abismos de Pasión* (1953), Buñuel's purest and, in spite of destructively indifferent acting, most successful exposition of *l'amour fou*. *Wuthering Heights* is the novel of a feverishly tortured imagination, and it can't be done by having Cathy tripping about on a photogenically wild moor while Heathcliff glowers sullenly through knitted eyebrows. It needs a touch of the inferno, which is precisely what Buñuel gives it with his petrified landscape of baked earth and blackened trees; and his action gives the lie to Marvell's famous couplet, “The grave's a fine and private place/But none I think do there embrace.” At the beginning and end of the film, a rifle shot startles the vultures perched on the gaunt branches, so that the

“SUSANA”.



smell of death literally hovers over the whole of the film as an accompaniment to the love of Catalina and Alejandro which ends in an embrace in the tomb.

Buñuel himself likes only the last reels, but he is unjust to the film. The final sequence in which Alejandro breaks into Catalina's tomb, throws himself on her body, and is shot by Ricardo/Hindley whom he imagines in his frenzy to be the spirit of Catalina, is superb, but it wouldn't have worked if the magnificently relentless cruelty of the lovers, towards themselves as well as others, had not been supported by the imagery of the entire film. *L'amour fou* is cruel in its uncompromising self-absorption, and it is cruelty which dominates this dead landscape: the butterflies pinned alive to Eduardo's drawing-board; the insects crushed underfoot; the fly casually tossed to a spider; the live toad thrown into a cauldron as an incantation. "Buñuel's bestiary," someone has written, and there is something fitting about this description of a film which is lovingly underlined by billows of the deceptively tender Wagner on the soundtrack.

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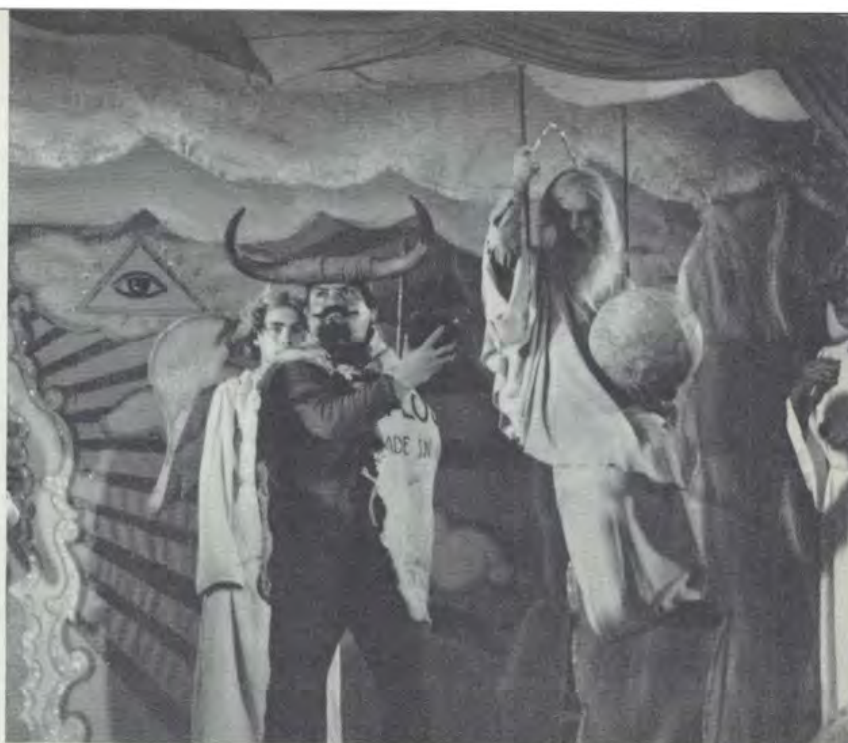
Closing this period comes an interlude as tender as that of *Robinson Crusoe*, where the frenzy of loneliness and frustration is conquered by the discovery of human companionship: in *Archibaldo de la Cruz*, the hero suddenly finds that he can be happy by simply throwing away the musical box which tortures his imagination. But before this, and before moving on to the important trio of French political essays, Buñuel made two more films, both minor, one delightful and one distinctly patchy.

La Ilusión viaja en Tranvia (1953) is a return to the gay insouciance of *Subida al Cielo*. Two men, the driver and conductor of a tram which has just been put out of service by the corporation, steal it one night while drunk and go for a ride, but find that once on a tram route it is difficult to get off again, and spend most of the next day desperately trying to dump the embarrassing object. The passengers they are forced to pick up at odd moments include, naturally, a wonderfully bizarre collection of characters: two dear old ladies with a portable figure of Christ carried round for purposes of fraud; a spinsterish schoolmarm with a horde of frightful boys; a busybody ex-employee of the tram corporation with an unfortunate heart condition; slaughter-house employees laden with pig's heads, kidneys and sides of beef.

Unlike the Ealing comedies which it sometimes fleetingly resembles, *La Ilusión* never overstates its case or milks its situations. Social comment over the misery caused by a corn famine, for instance, is limited to a brief shot of breadlines outside a shop, and later, a gloriously funny sequence in which a black market hoard of priceless corn is accidentally discovered, and what appears to be the whole of Mexico City comes running for plunder. Similarly, any tendency to sentimentality is kept severely in check, as in the sequence where an orphan boy is teased by his schoolmates into thinking that a buxom actress filming by the roadside is his long-lost mother, and is last seen gazing intently at her as she sluttishly fixes her stocking. The acid side of Buñuel's nature makes welcome appearances too, notably in the hilariously irreverent Biblical pageant performed during the holiday festivities, and in the coolly cautious "Can he pay?" with which a pharmacist greets a near-dead patient carried into his shop for treatment.

Buñuel's timing is so secure that he can risk the oldest gags—a girl gesticulates from the tram to her lover following by car, and while arguing with her he piles into the back of a lorry—and bring them off. *La Ilusión viaja en Tranvia*, as the commentator stresses at the beginning, never pretends to be more than a frolicsome anecdote, but *El Rio y la Muerte* (1954) which examines the mystique of the vendetta in a remote Mexican village, is a fine film gone wrong. Shot in Buñuel's best casual style, the never-ending round of killings in which someone kills someone else over an imagined insult, and is then avenged by a relative who is killed by the next avenger, begins by being ludicrous but gradually becomes horrifying in its inevitability. More than anything else the vendetta is a ritual, carried out almost without passion.

At the centre of the mystique is the black, brooding river, on the opposite bank of which is the cemetery where victims



"LA ILUSION VIAJA EN TRANVIA",

are taken for burial in garlanded boats, and which also serves as a sanctuary for the killers if they can swim across unharmed. A prospective killer, knowing that he must soon avenge a relative, will take his belongings to be ferried across to the sanctuary to await his arrival; friends of the dead man, if they feel that the killer acted in good faith, discharge their weapons harmlessly into the air as he plunges in to swim the river; funeral processions wind through the streets on their way to the killer's home so that the dead man can pay a formal call to make his protest.

The whole atmosphere is beautifully realised in a central sequence in which two killers from opposite camps meet in the sanctuary, suspend their task of killing each other during an amnesty which permits them to return for the funeral of a beloved village elder, and form a budding friendship which is violently broken when "the rules" force them back into the roles neither of them wants to play. The story, unfortunately, is told in flashback by a bright-eyed young hero who has left the village to study medicine in Mexico City. Now a fully-fledged idealist planning to save life instead of taking it, he returns to his native village to prove that he burns with a different kind of courage than that needed to fight a vendetta. The sequences which open and close the film, with this hero, who is just recovering from a bout of polio, telling his story to his dewy-eyed nurse, and setting out for his village with a mouthful of platitudes which would make even the most hardened of neo-realists blench, all but destroy the film.

Buñuel, of course, has never been at his happiest with intellectual argument or ideas which have to be explained (in *El Rio y la Muerte*, the mystique of the river and its sanctuary has to be expounded by the commentator). It is perhaps for this reason that his next trio of political films tend to seem slightly script-bound. *La Mort en ce Jardin*, in particular, has to struggle through a mass of exposition before it can whisk its characters off into the jungle and really get down to business. By comparison, films like *Susana*, *El* and *Abismos de Pasión* start straight in at the heart of the matter; which, for a seeker after paroxysms like Buñuel, is probably the only way.

* * *

The recent National Film Theatre season added three films to those we have already been able to see. There are only four more unknowns: *Gran Casino* (1946) which sounds nicely bizarre from Buñuel's comment on it as, "A film with songs. They sang tangos and I don't know what else—a lot anyhow"; *El Gran Calavera* (1949) and *Una Mujer sin Amor* (1951), both said to be fascinating in reports from Paris; and *La Hija del Engaño* (1951). Perhaps they too will emerge one day, and then the real Buñuel article can be written.

FILM REVIEWS

OF A THOUSAND DELIGHTS

VISCONTI'S LATEST FILM begins in Geneva: a large, airy, modern flat, full of international smart set types. Conversation sparkles; the cocktails are poured; the lights are soft. We hear the sound of romantic 19th century piano music, and suddenly a woman stops chattering, and begins to withdraw slightly within herself. There is talk that she and her husband are leaving the next day for her family home. We cut, and over the credits we see the motorways roll by: Lausanne, Montreux, Brig, the Alps. Suddenly we are in Tuscany, approaching the town of Volterra. The prologue is over, the tragedy about to begin.

For this is a tragedy. Like Thebes, Volterra is a city dying, like human beings, of a mortal sickness; it is gradually crumbling away. Like Mycenae, it is perched high on a hill, surrounded by a cyclopean wall of stones, shaken by the winds of tragedy. Mycenae is very much to the point here, for it is not long after the return that the inevitable recognition scene takes place: Sandra (Claudia Cardinale) meets her brother Gianni (Jean Sorel) by the tomb of her father, and we realise suddenly that this is to be the story of Electra and Orestes, the House of Atreus. Since this is the Electra story, we might as well call the characters by their tragic names. Both Electra and Orestes have returned to their old home to celebrate the memory of the dead Agamemnon, who, twenty years ago, was killed at Auschwitz. Now, the family have decided to offer the palazzo garden to the city as his memorial. Clytemnestra is not far off: an ex-musician (Marie Bell), she has gone mad at some time in the past, and lives in her part of the palace, pounding out César Franck dementedly on the piano. Aegisthus is the family solicitor (Renzo Ricci).

Electra and Orestes are convinced that not only did their mother carry on an affair with Aegisthus, but that between them they managed to get her Jewish husband deported, and thus killed. On the other hand, Aegisthus maintains that this is pure invention on the part of the boy and girl in order to cover up their own crime: incest. We are never to discover, in fact, whether either of these accusations is true. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra might be totally innocent; so

might Electra and Orestes, although there is a very strong suggestion that at least the desire for an incestuous relationship existed on the part of Orestes. Neither Clytemnestra nor Aegisthus is killed, and Electra goes off at the end to rejoin her husband. Only Orestes dies, by his own hand; even this gesture is ambiguous, for it is possible that he was only feigning suicide in an effort to bring Electra over to his side.

As a result, no real catharsis is possible, and the drama is never truly resolved. Does the film then suffer from the lack of any decisive satisfying action? Has Visconti failed, as so many others have failed before him, in the attempt to create a modern tragedy? I think not. For, like Cocteau in *Les Parents Terribles* (this was Visconti's first stage production 30 years ago), he has succeeded in creating the climate of tragedy, which is perhaps as far as any modern artist can go. But where Cocteau relied on the intimate, microscopic approach, Visconti has turned—as before—to opera. Opera as a genre began as a serious archaeological attempt to re-create Greek drama. Nowadays we realise how laughable is the gap between Euripides and Monteverdi, but the tragic tradition has found in Italian opera its only true modern counterpart, both in its aims, and in its social function. If anything ever resembled the Theatre of Dionysus as social centre, then it was La Scala at the time of Verdi.

Senso, of course, was operatic, but that was an easier problem to solve—19th century Venice, colour, and the backdrop of the Risorgimento. *Rocco*, too, was in the same genre, but there I feel Visconti came to grief by trying to ally the operatic with social realism. This time, leaving realism behind, he seems to me to have succeeded. How? The tremendous contrast between the prologue and the drama proper points the way. From the open-plan room, from the broad highways, we suddenly are confronted with a dark palace. Never have so many doors been opened and shut in a film before: opened, shut, locked, forced, half-opened.

But the darkness of the house is contrasted with the light outside: this is a summer tragedy. This light is bright, blinding, even. The contrast is accentuated by the way in which Visconti has lit and shot the film. In opposition to the prevailing fashion of grey films, *Vaghe Stelle dell'Orsa* is highly contrasty. There is strong highlighting on the characters; Cardinale's bright white shawl, the white shroud on the father's statue, Jean Sorel's white turtle-neck sweater.

In the great finale of the second act (the film is neatly divided into three days), Orestes goes around trying to light up the house for the supposedly reconciliatory dinner party. The best he can do is to stuff bulbs into every available socket. If one hadn't grasped the significance of this contrast of dark and light before, the conversation about electric light and its clinical effects would tip one off. Visconti, to my knowledge, has among all his stage productions only done one Greek tragedy, *Medea*. There too he expressed the essence of Greek tragedy; as these dramas were originally played outside in the blazing Hellenic sun, his production featured the whitest of Mediterranean white sets.

Amidst the highly unfashionable contrasty appearance of this film, the actions of the characters are equally unfashionably grand. Manuscripts are burned, Electra's husband makes what Orestes calls a star exit, while Orestes calls out, *La commedia è finita*. It is tempting, indeed, to single out the mad passion of Electra's husband for making home-movies as a slam by Visconti at the prevailing mode of *cinéma vérité*: it probably annoys him as much as it does Electra. (In the Euripides version of *Electra*, she is married to a peasant; is the fact that her husband in the film is an American another sly dig on the part of the master?)

In any case, Visconti has always gone against the prevailing fashions. When he made *Ossessione*, Italy was—whatever the apologists try to make out on the strength of a couple of films by Blasetti and Rossellini—firmly in the cradle of the white telephone.

"OF A THOUSAND DELIGHTS": JEAN SOREL, CLAUDIA CARDINALE.



La Terra Trema is seemingly neo-realist in accordance with the year it was made, but even that film is now seen as more of an aesthetic, calligraphic work than a realist one. In *Senso* he took a hard, tough, neo-classical story, and made it into a welter of the headiest romanticism. His most publicised departure from film fashion was *White Nights*, which broke decisively and finally with neo-realism.

But sheer determination not to go along the well-travelled road has never been a guarantee of a successful work of art. What counts here is the tremendous conviction one feels behind the film, a conviction one did not always recognise in *Rocco*. There is also a dramatic intensity which was absent from *The Leopard*, a feeling that the film is all one massive whole, like the cyclopean blocks that make up the walls of Volterra. This solidity is of course contrasted with the nearly deliquescent nature of the drama; just as, in spite of the walls, Volterra is the centre of a slide area. We see the church with a gaping cleft in the façade, and Orestes tells us that slowly the whole town is crumbling away. This might be interpreted as a mild attempt by Visconti to inject an element of social comment—death of the aristocracy—but I do not think so, any more than was this the purpose of Bellocchio's *I Pugnì in Tasca*. Strange, how much these two films resemble each other in theme, although totally differing in form and treatment. And strange, too, how *I Pugnì in Tasca* reminds one of Cocteau—not *Les Parents Terribles*, but *Les Enfants Terribles*. If any literary tradition could have been imagined as being unlikely to produce descendants, it would be that of Cocteau. And yet, and yet.

In one respect, Visconti has beaten Cocteau—in his handling of the actors. For in *Les Parents Terribles*, apart from the self-propelled performances of Yvonne de Bray and Gabrielle Dorziat, Cocteau didn't succeed in really bringing Marais and Josette Day up to either their level or that of the film. But here Visconti has done just that with both Claudia Cardinale and Jean Sorel. Of course they both look superb, but for the very first time, I believe, each has really proved he can act.

Now for a sad caveat. The print shown by Gala in London bears very little resemblance to the subtitled one I first saw. It seems, in fact, to have been duped directly from a subtitled New York print rather than from the original negative—or even a dupe negative. As a result the high-contrast effects Visconti was obviously aiming at are unpleasantly muted. No longer do the white door-knobs, the plaster cast of Agamemnon's hand, the shrouded statue gleam with whiteness. And gone, too, is the sense of high summer.

RICHARD ROUD

DEAR JOHN

WHEN THE SWEDISH CINEMA in this country has meant for so long Bergman and an occasional Sjöberg, it is pleasant to note that Lars Magnus Lindgren's *Dear John* (Miracle) is not only showing commercially here, but opened before the London Film Festival, at which it was first seen, had come to an end. Lindgren, a well-established director in Sweden, is new to this country, but now that we have had the chance to see *Dear John*, we can only hope that more of his films may reach us. *Dear John* is about love, the love of two people who meet



"DEAR JOHN".

accidentally and spend a weekend together. And when, in the opening sequence, Lindgren's camera dwells on a man and a woman in bed together, one's immediate reaction is to smile wryly and wait for a dreary corroboration of the popular image of sex in Sweden. It is soon apparent that the film is much more than that, and by the end one is acutely aware not of having watched a spectacle about love, but of having shared its development and seen its essence exemplified by the complexity of two people's reactions to each other.

For Lindgren's film is at once simple and complex, both in its treatment and in its content. In its content because though the film covers only a single weekend and is concerned with only two people, we feel by the end that we have watched these people responding to each other in a way that makes perfect sense simply because we can believe that they are emotionally ready for each other. In its treatment because Lindgren's method is to begin at the climax of the weekend, when the couple have explored the potential of their relationship and are almost ready to recognise their love, and then to cut in a series of quick flashbacks which show how this relationship has developed.

We first meet John when, as captain of a sand-barge, he brings his boat into a small Baltic port. It is Saturday night, and as John says later: "We always imagine that in the next port we will find the one we're looking for." But this port promises little, and while the rest of the crew leave for the local People's Park, John and his mate go to the café on the sea-front. Here they are served by Anita, a young unmarried mother, who (as we learn later) had first seen John two years ago when he came in drunk. John asks Anita to dinner, but she puts him off. Next morning John meets Anita swimming, and they spend the day at Copenhagen zoo with Anita's daughter. When they return, they spend the night together until Monday morning dawns and it is time for John to leave with his cargo. This is the action of the film, built up in short, sharp snatches of

memory as John and Anita lie in bed together.

Lindgren's technique of constant inter-cutting gives an almost impressionistic account of the affair. What is different about his method is that the cuts not only refer backwards to something we have already seen, but sometimes look forward in time. Thus when John asks Anita in the café whether she is married, she replies, "No, but I have a little girl"; we then cut forward to a shot we have already seen—Anita in bed with John saying: "When it happened I liked Helena's father a lot." Repeated shots like this almost assume the air of a motif, and this effect is heightened by several recurring shots: two geese zooming across the evening sky, an aircraft ominous on the grey horizon, a jetty looming out into the sea. Rune Ericson's photography perfectly captures the feeling of a small Northern port, the sun peering through the mist, the sea glistening in the early morning light, the boredom of waiting for a bus in the middle of nowhere. And Jarl Kulle as John and Christina Schollin as Anita give performances which exactly match the depth of Lindgren's direction.

There is only one lapse in Lindgren's control over the film: the ironic intercutting between animals and spectators in the zoo sequence is surely borrowed from Haanstra's *Zoo*. But if the ending of the film, when John telephones Anita and for the first time calls her by her real name, Anna, seems abrupt and obscure, that is no fault of Lindgren's: a cut has removed several minutes of an earlier dialogue sequence between John and his mate which makes the final telephone conversation follow naturally on what has gone before.

DAVID WILSON

LOTNA

SOMEWHERE IN THE twentieth century, the Romantic gesture finally died, killed off along with the bugles and the banners by the impersonal efficiency of modern mechanisation. If there was a moment of truth, it must surely have looked something like the Polish cavalry's forlorn Second World War charge against German tanks in *Lotna* (Contemporary), a gallant display of levelled lances and flying pennants which ends in the futile clash of sword against stout armour-plating. One can die for a proudly prancing horse, but not for a lumbering tank; and like the old nobleman in Ray's *Jalsaghar* who sits dreaming of past glories in his music room while progress rumbles outside in the roar of heavy lorries, Andrzej Wajda's film enshrines a bitter regret for a world that is lost forever.

At the beginning of the film, before dismounting at a deserted country mansion, Captain Chodakiewicz and his cavalry squadron pause to admire a magnificent white mare galloping unconcernedly through the plumes of earth thrown up by shellfire. They wander through the echoing halls of tapestries, porcelain statuary and silverware, until they come to a room where a solitary old man lies dying amidst his baroque splendours. With him in the room (*Lotna* is frequently touched by surrealism) is the white mare, Lotna, which he presents to the Captain, and which subsequently passes from officer to officer as each owner is killed in turn. The symbolism is as obvious as the wooden Christ hanging upside down in *Ashes and Diamonds*, but just as striking in



"LOTNA".

its boldness. *Lotna*, the dream of beauty, is also the emblem of death; and when at the end of the film she breaks a leg and has to be shot, there is nothing for the two men who have fought to possess her but to abandon their dead, ravaged homeland and head for the frontier.

Bearing witness to the destruction of an ideal, *Lotna* is a deeply pessimistic film, built on an image of decay and obsessed by death. It begins with a dying year, an autumnal landscape of falling leaves and pale skies; moves through the collapse of all faith in beauty and gallantry; and ends with the death of a country, turned into a stunted, withered landscape peopled with the broken cadavers of men and horses. The note of melancholy introduced by the old aristocrat dying in the quiet neglect of his palace, swells in urgency until it pervades the film with sharp contrasts of life and death: heaps of gleaming fish lie throbbing on a kitchen table while a cat stealthily feeds off one of the living corpses; a tank rolls remorselessly over the fallen body of a wounded horse.

Almost all of Wajda's imagery here is bizarre—too bizarre, perhaps, for some tastes. Apples are stored in coffins, a burning eagle glares down at the bombed ruins of the schoolhouse, the captain's body is borne past a butcher hacking with his cleaver at a side of beef, a wedding follows so closely on a funeral that the bride's veil catches on the bier. But *Lotna*, after all, is in itself something of a romantic gesture; its baroque excesses are also its strength, and one either likes them or one doesn't. Wajda's climax to his imagery of death is characteristic of the film. Two cavalymen return to the squadron they have left encamped in a wood, and discover that it has been heavily bombed in their absence. The sequence opens with a sense of spellbound wonder as they draw aside a veil of gauze fluttering against the trees, and the camera tracks slowly in to survey a tableau of frozen, horrifying beauty. At the centre, a horse lies with its neck arched in graceful arabesque against a tree-trunk, and it is only the jaws snapped wide in agony that insist that this is no enchanted forest awaiting the lifting of a spell.

With vivid strangeness, underlined by Wajda's extraordinary use of colour, *Lotna* records the passing of a civilisation. The night sequences are shot in sepia, with most of the day scenes dominated by the pale browns and greens of autumn exteriors (echoed in the cavalry uniforms), so that the more delicate tints—the blue of a Wedgwood vase, the red of an apple—seem to be gradually enveloped in a wash of drabness. The white mare, like the brave captain in Munk's *Eroica* who has to be hidden away in the prison camp to conceal the truth of his failure to escape, is a myth in which people want, or need, to believe in order to preserve their faith; and the last shot is of a withered, blackened landscape in which the two men bury *Lotna's* body under a pile of branches. Nothing remains but the flat eternity of Sartre's hell: "Eh bien, continuons..."

TOM MILNE

KING RAT

PERHAPS THE MOST striking thing about *King Rat* (Columbia) is the matter of its timing. Ten years ago, a prisoner-of-war film starring John Mills could have been expected to take only one form: the heroic. Five years ago, one imagines that a major Hollywood company confronted with James Clavell's novel (best-seller or no) would probably have thought twice about it. Now Columbia, a company with a shrewder record than many in gauging public demand, have invested what looks on the face of it like a fair-size budget in a film which converts the traditional prisoner-of-war image into that of scavengers in a charnel-house. Have they accurately hit the down-swing of the pendulum of taste? The box-office takings are going to be worth watching.

The king rat himself is an American Corporal King (George Segal) who has built up a nice line in trading with the Japanese guards of Changi Camp, keeps a

retinue of fellow-prisoners to shine his shoes and iron his shirts, and achieves his great coup by breeding rats which can be sold for food to officer-prisoners under the guise of some exotic Oriental delicacy. A young English officer (James Fox) at first reacts with public-school coolness to Yankee bluster, then becomes King's ardent acolyte. Other British prisoners, when not tampering with the weights to cheat their companions out of their rice ration, are likely to be found wailing piteously and insanely in the camp chicken-run over the death of their pets. The one man who stands out resolutely for orthodox morality is Provost Marshal Grey; and he is a bundle of rabid puritanism, class-consciousness and neurotic resentment, played by Tom Courtenay with stabbing ferocity from behind clenched teeth.

This unappealing character, it's suggested, is sustained only by his hatred of King: discipline of a kind is founded on spite and malevolence. King himself performs virtually the film's only positive action, in saving the life of his English friend with drugs from a bootleg supply. And at the end—after a scene in which all the prisoners except King are too dazed, numb and shocked to do anything but back apprehensively away when their first English rescuer arrives—normality of a kind reasserts itself. King is downcast to find that his status is now merely that of a corporal; though a corporal, one would have thought, with a spectacular career in the civilian black market ahead of him. The young Englishman, slower off the mark in adjusting to change, is left gazing forlornly after the truck in which King and his fellow-Americans are moving out, in an image irresistibly reminiscent of the girl who's left behind in *The Big Parade*.

Directed either more coolly or more outrageously (as a kind of *Catch 22* of Changi) one can imagine the ironies achieving their impact, and the conflict between King and Grey making some comment on the mechanics and morality of survival. But Bryan Forbes, making his first American film in an impressive

permanent set built outside Hollywood, goes bull-headedly for the new brutalism. The *pièce de résistance*, in more senses than one, is a scene in which King gives a dinner party of dog-meat chopped from a fellow-prisoner's dead pet. Reactions of conventional outrage when the guests are told just what they are about to eat change gradually to slavering excitement: King the outrageous realist has scored another blow below the belt. But Bryan Forbes underscores the scene so heavily as to invite an audience reaction of revulsion without sympathy. And throughout the film the shots of haggard faces, terrified rats, gangrenous limbs, are so organised that the effect is arduously vulgarised: last-ditch degradation simulated by sweating actors.

This isn't, I would think, the intention so much as the result of a style which seems almost afraid to be caught out in understatement. At the end, for instance, it's not enough that we should see King crestfallen and diminished: we have also to be reminded of his corporal's stripes contrasted with the chevrons of the tough sergeant ordering him into the truck. Even the frozen shots, that badge of innovation for so many British directors, make their appearance just as one had begun to hope that the film might manage to survive without them. Mr. Forbes and his veteran Hollywood cameraman, Burnett Guffey, have achieved some effective shots of heat and sun-dazzle; some minor scenes (the frying of an egg, for instance, rousing a hutful of men to agonised envy) can stand up to the over-emphatic treatment; and if George Segal fails to give King the satanic charm that seems to be implicit in the character's make-up, the other performances are throughout serviceable. One is left, though, with the film's equivocations. Dog eats man is honest horror. Man eats dog seems to demand the cool, unblinking stare of a Buñuel.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE PEACH THIEF

SAID TO BE the first Bulgarian feature to be shown commercially in this country, *The Peach Thief* (Contemporary) has much of the leisurely charm of some of the best Russian period pieces. Set in a small Balkan town towards the end of the First World War, it sketches with quiet conviction the crumbling morale of the all-but-defeated Bulgarian army. The town Commandant, a martinet of the old school, seeks to ease his disappointment and frustration by fanatically protecting his health, his peach garden, and his young wife Elisabeth. She is dutiful, but bored and lonely, so that when a hungry young Serbian prisoner-of-war breaks into the garden to steal peaches her interest is easily engaged and soon they are helplessly in love. He is a schoolmaster, a reluctant soldier, a sort of latter-day Bluntschli, who is on such good terms with his captors that he comes and goes as he pleases. They have time to snatch only a few short interludes together before he is shot as an intruder just as his fellow-prisoners are beginning their long march to freedom.

The film is full of minor pleasures—small carefully observed details, like the Commandant's compulsive gargling and hand-washing, the starving prisoner's delicacy in hesitating to fall ravenously on food in front of Elisabeth, and his canny hiding of two of the confiscated peaches, one of which he

gives to his obliging guard and one to a prisoner friend. The director, Vulo Radev, has indeed an indulgent eye for human weakness. Even the Commandant is not an entirely unsympathetic character—one understands the reasons for his unbending rectitude, and he is played with tact and restraint by Mikhail Mikhailov. There is a whole gallery of minor portraits too; the Commandant's servant, a debonair French prisoner, and an excitable young Bulgarian patriot, all drawn with wit and warmth. The peach thief himself is played by Radé Markovic, a Bulgarian Mastroianni who not only looks like the Italian actor but has something of his wry humour as well as a candid fire of his own. Designed with an accurate instinct for place and period, the film moves at a stately pace and only occasionally slips into a kind of excess that may have stemmed from fashionable Russian influences—as in a long fast tracking shot through a birch wood. But on the whole it is gently, even lovingly done. While it does not excite or exhilarate at the time of viewing, it survives with surprising strength in the memory.

BRENDA DAVIES

BUS RILEY'S BACK IN TOWN

THIS IS ONE of those films which arrives with a record of interference: William Inge took his name off the credits, some re-shooting with another director was reported, and so on. None of them good omens; and *Bus Riley's Back in Town* (Rank) is, frankly, a bit of a mess, though worth looking at because its young director, Harvey Hart, has tried to do something with it and something of this does come through. Hart is known mainly through his Canadian TV work—a likeable example was shown recently on BBC TV.

When Bus Riley (Michael Parks) returns from the Navy to his mother and two sisters, the whole community starts talking, for Bus has an old flame, Laurel, who jilted him for a wealthy husband and is still smouldering. For a time, one expects this to be the main theme (especially when Ann-Margret, now confirmed as the most sexless sex-kitten after Carroll Baker, heaves and pouts into sight). Gradually, however, the subsidiary characters claim attention and we see where Hart's interests lie. Bus's pudgy little sister Gussie (Kim Darby) is an inveterate match-maker, and when the family gives shelter to her friend Judy (Janet Margolin) after her mother dies, she seizes her chance to interest Bus in someone other than Laurel. One of the film's nicest scenes finds all three chatting quietly on a bed, heads bent over the rail, and here one senses the suppressed eagerness of the girls and the vulnerability of the boy. Hart also has fun with the rather bizarre but unforced comic episodes, as when Bus teams up with an enterprising vacuum cleaner salesman and learns the soft sell as they go the rounds among the gullible housewives. In short, this is one of those films where practically every other scene clicks into life, although one has to put up with a good deal of fairly clichéd plotting when Ann-Margret is around.

Hart was lucky in having Russell Metty to do his colour camerawork: the little town is neatly sketched in through the locations, and Metty's distinctive camera style comes through in several high-angle tracking shots, like the gently overheard conversation

between Bus and Judy as they stroll through the park. Gentleness is perhaps the operative word here, not least in the remarkably quiet ending when Bus returns from his final break with Laurel and feels himself one of the family again and free to go forward. Michael Parks, handsome, likeable and relaxed, if a little too Method-bound, has already gone into bigger things (Huston's *The Bible*); Harvey Hart's future film career looks less certain at the moment. But Universal, who have apparently rather lost confidence in their scheme to use untried film-makers on low-budget pictures, did find a director with this one.

JOHN GILLET

THE GREAT RACE

BLAKE EDWARDS' LATEST FILM is a lot of fun, but hardly ever very funny. "For Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy" the opening dedication reads, and *The Great Race* (Warner-Pathé) is for the most part an act of homage to the world of film comedy rather than a contribution to it. Almost every mile of the road covered between New York and Paris by the competing cars of the two Edwardian stuntmen—the heroic, fearless Great Leslie (Tony Curtis, all in white, his teeth and eyes literally flashing) and his villainous rival, the fearsome Professor Fate (Jack Lemmon, all in black, snorting and twirling his moustache)—is signposted with references to earlier films and theatrical conventions.

What Edwards does not do, and what *It's a Mad etc. World* did, is attempt to compete with his sources. The appeal of his film is in its arrogance (the idea that he could get away with an almost non-existent scenario for nearly three hours), its elegance, and its charm.

The key to the puzzle of the film's curious, if limited, success is to be found in our response to its much publicised pie-throwing sequence, the most elaborate and expensive ever staged. The characters have been brought almost halfway around the world to rendezvous in this particular cellar. Once they are there, Edwards takes a commonplace scene—the neat kitchen with its pies arranged in an orderly fashion like a painter's brushes and tubes—and transforms it into a work of art. He has not reduced order to chaos but substituted a more impressive, an artistic order. The room after the fight looks less like the end of a shooting session at the Keystone studio than the result of a satisfying and vigorous day's work in the studio of Karel Appel. The participants emerge from the fray like figures stepping out of a Kossoff or Auerbach canvas, covered not by cream but by elegantly applied thick impasto, thrown not to rob them of their dignity but to enhance their appearance. We gaze with wonder and delight at the spectacle but do not laugh.

It is the same earlier on when eccentric flying machines twice crash down in the same pond. The laughter that might have come is aesthetically neutralised by the sheer beauty of the rich brown mud on the victims' black clothing.

One could go on to cite other virtues: the style with which the largely wasted Natalie Wood shows off her apparently inexhaustible wardrobe, the touching performance of Peter Falk as Fate's assistant, the lack of sentiment in the general wash of nostalgia (prevented partly it is true by abundant anachronism in both performance and décor); but indulgence can go too far. The



CARS PARKED ON AN ICEBERG IN "THE GREAT RACE".

plain fact is that Blake Edwards can, and should, do much better than this. He has written some of the most amusing scripts of recent years, and *The Great Race* has quite the feeblest screenplay he has ever worked on; the *longueurs* come when the script occasionally gets the upper hand. The film is indeed something of a let down after the varied achievement of his previous five pictures. It would be disappointing if there were nothing ahead other than a succession of comedies of conspicuous expenditure. After *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *The Grip of Fear* and *Days of Wine and Roses*, one has good reason to believe that Edwards, unlike the cars in *The Great Race*, has something more than just a Pink Panther in his tank.

PHILIP FRENCH

LADY L

PETER USTINOV is a man of many talents, acclaimed as a theatre director, a brilliant raconteur, a past-master of the eccentric. But his talents, like his origins, are diversified and supra-national—so that when he turns his hand to the cinema one expects him to produce a kind of one-man show, an anarchic stream of individualism. And with *Lady L* (M-G-M) that is exactly what one gets. Ustinov's latest film has all the pan-European paraphernalia of the mongrel himself: a Corsican laundress, a bumbling Parisian *chef de police*, an English aristocrat, several disorganised anarchists, a virtuoso Polish pianist, and Ustinov himself, adding the final touch as a dotty central European potentate.

Ustinov has taken Romain Gary's story of Louise, a laundress who begins life in a *fin de siècle* Parisian brothel, marries an anarchist, and ends as an English dowager duchess, and made of it something expressly his own. The film begins with the 80-year-old duchess (Sophia Loren) surrounded by the assorted lights of her family and returning to the red-lamped summerhouse she has built on to her

stately home to recount the story of her life to the man who is to write her biography. We then move to Paris, where the proprietor of a brothel is introducing the laundress to a cabinet minister. But Louise has her own ideas of the perfect man, and he makes his appearance as Armand, an anarchist who, having just robbed a bank single-handed, finds refuge from the police in the brothel.

Here magnificent décor and Ustinov's natural genius for the totally unlikely lend the sequence an engaging touch of the goonish. The police chief (nicely played by Claude Dauphin) wanders through the corridors of the brothel opening doors on to perversions (a cabinet minister who likes to think he's in a railway compartment) straight out of Genet. Touches of madness like this enliven the film. When half the Paris police force, in bowler hats and complete with artillery reinforcements (including a cannon), surround the brothel in a last-ditch attempt to bring Armand to justice, the inmates naturally escape by balloon; the recurring opening bars of Chopin's "Revolutionary" Etude are invariably accompanied by an exploding bomb; and Ustinov himself provides a few inspired moments as the Bavarian prince who catches the bomb thrown at him by Armand's anarchists and proceeds to enjoy himself by juggling with it.

The trouble is that baroque moments like this are few and far between; and the rest is just dull. Henri Alekan's photography occasionally springs to life, but the lighting is too often inexcusably inadequate, the colour sometimes looks like one of those early Technicolor horrors, and the editing of some of the dialogue scenes is painfully old-fashioned (Armand speaks to Louise, and we watch from over his shoulder; she replies and we look over hers—and all shot in middle-distance). Ustinov's screenplay falters in the same way: there is a string of jokes about national characteristics ("England, it's a state of mind"), and occasionally a really witty line, but one has the feeling throughout that the actors can never really rise to their lines, that it is Ustinov himself who ought to be saying

them. And, indeed, he obviously felt something of this himself, because he actually dubs his own voice over at least one of the French actors. Sophia Loren makes the best of a difficult role, and David Niven gives a polished performance as the duke, but Paul Newman is sadly miscast as Armand.

Perhaps a mad extravaganza like this is necessarily uneven—or perhaps Ustinov, for all his eccentric brilliance, was the wrong man to direct it. As it is, all one remembers of *Lady L* are its bits and pieces.

DAVID WILSON

THE FACE OF FU MANCHU and A STUDY IN TERROR

TWO FILMS HAVING IN COMMON the revival of legendary fictional heroes (the dastardly Fu and Sherlock Holmes), and extreme visual stylishness. Otherwise, though, there is no comparison; as a piece of lively and effective cinema *The Face of Fu Manchu* (Warner-Pathé) wins hands down. Largely this is the doing of Don Sharp, who here confirms the impression of *Kiss of the Vampire* that he is one of the most inventive and stylish directors around British studios at present.

The plot is eventful, to say the least, with a constant succession of pitched battles between Fu's minions, out to give him world domination by obtaining and then making discriminating use of the most powerful poison yet known (a plan of cosmic destructiveness worthy of Doctor Mabuse), and the doggedly systematic representatives of law and order. There are several splendid set-pieces, like the wild car chase through East London and the Essex marshes (1920s cars bombed, by hand, from a small and rickety plane), or the opening 'execution' of Fu, or the exemplary poisoning of the village of Fleetwick, just to show that Fu means business. But the film is not just set-pieces: the story keeps moving at a fair belt between whiles, and the acting of everyone in sight, even the juveniles who generally come off worst in this sort of piece, is agreeably spirited: when the young heroine is threatened by a sinister oriental hand sliding round her living-room door with a missive, she wastes no time in helpless wails, but smartly slams the door on it, sensible girl.

No such flashes of unfamiliar good sense enliven *A Study in Terror* (Compton): when Jack the Ripper strikes, all his prostitute victims do is wriggle seductively, then scream like mad. The murders (rather in the style of *Peeping Tom*) are in fact the principal set-pieces of James Hill's film, and are reasonably well handled in a conventional sort of way. But between them things slacken off disastrously, leaving us far too much time to admire the excellent and unfamiliar London locations (prettily photographed by Desmond Dickinson) and brood over the inadequacies of John Neville's Holmes, Donald Houston's Watson, and Donald and Derek Ford's sometimes alarmingly unidiomatic period dialogue. The film is enlivened from time to time by guest appearances (Kay Walsh, Cecil Parker and Robert Morley), but the most prominent of the guest spots, Georgia Brown in a nattily Victorianised rather than believably Victorian pub, is straight *Stars and Garters*. Which, come to think of it, just about describes the whole film.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

THE EPIC THAT NEVER WAS

WHOEVER FIRST THOUGHT UP the idea of a piece of cine-archaeology into why Sternberg's *I, Claudius* was never completed, it could hardly fail to be fascinating. Korda and Laughton were dead, but there remained several articulate witnesses ready and willing to be interviewed: Emyln Williams, Flora Robson, Robert Graves and Sternberg. One had known for years that a considerable amount of shot film survived in somebody's vaults. That Bill Duncalf's *The Epic That Never Was* (BBC/TV) should also turn out to be passionate and moving was less to be expected. Partly the credit is due to Dirk Bogarde, who appears as narrator, and whose involvement springs a little from his own memories of the vast sets down at Denham which he visited in 1936 as a very young student of scenic design; more especially, from his partisanship as an actor. For the hero of *Epic* slowly emerges as—not Sternberg, not the book itself, despite Bogarde's generous and romantically speculative readings from it—but the actor who played Claudius, Charles Laughton.

The film, running just over an hour, begins with an unhurried, sonorous flourish. To the accompaniment of aptly portentous music, the camera tracks along the path to the doors of a deserted studio. Here it rests upon a faded poster proclaiming some law or licence of Cinematography, while a voice from the thirty-year-old soundtrack utters a death sentence before dissolving into crazed, uninhibited laughter. (It sounds like Laughton but turns out to be Emyln Williams's Caligula.)

One's attention is sealed, as in a pressure-cooker, and remains so through a carefully juxtaposed pattern of interviews, camera trackings through Denham's impressively derelict shell, rushes from *I, Claudius* and edited film. The latter is obviously the main source of interest, and is wisely left to the second half. First come the interviews, and they are a model of their kind. Graves, casually shabby and terse of speech, fills in the background. He liked Korda, liked the cast and liked what he saw of the rushes, but regretted Korda's penchant for employing untalented Hungarians. He didn't care for the script ("The army is revolting," he quotes, inquiring what sort of English that is meant to be) and dryly defines the fate of his own script—"It was filed."

Dame Flora, posed graciously against the mantelpiece of her friend John Abbott's Hollywood home, recalls how thrilled she was to be working for her first great Hollywood director. Sometimes he wore a silk dressing-gown, sometimes a turban of silk and riding-kit. She regarded him as the last of the old-style directors who dressed up for the part, yet couldn't help being "astonished" by his lace-up boots.

Already the merest hint of antagonism creeps into the interviews. Sternberg, his hair and glasses steely, recalls that he was given Laughton (whom Korda could no longer direct) and Merle Oberon: he chose the rest of the cast. There were days when Laughton was very good (we see the rushes); days when he was not so good ("That's the broadest East End cockney I ever heard," Laughton scornfully comments on a difficult speech which he has fluffed painfully several times in succession); days when he couldn't film at all. Merle Oberon enlarges on the agonies which Laughton suffered before he could "find the part." We hear Sternberg's

voice during the rushes; once see him momentarily as he comes into frame to rearrange a costume. What we never once see at the end of a rush is a happy actor's face.

Williams casts some light on Sternberg's methods. They didn't meet till his costume fitting for Caligula ("I had to wear a couple of hostess gowns, a cocktail number and a false fringe"), when Sternberg explained that the character was depraved and "well, maybe a bit . . . cissy?" At the end of one scene, Sternberg asks Williams to turn his head a fraction to the right. Later, after the scene where Caligula makes his horse a senator and which marked Williams's last day of work on the picture, Williams quotes a technician. The poor horse never got to make his entrance after all, but if "Joe had mounted it he'd have won the Grand National."

Ample tribute is paid to Sternberg's technical skill, notably by Eileen Corbett, the continuity girl on the picture, who remembers him cutting the rushes on Sundays at a prodigious rate. And there is evidence of that skill in much of the edited material. But the tone grows increasingly astringent. Sternberg, crisply pronouncing his opinions between slow puffs on his pipe, says of Merle Oberon's car crash that "actors truncated my project." It is admittedly a little unfair that Sternberg's interviews were evidently shot first, and then cut in such a way that Williams could comment on them. "Actors truncated my project," Williams echoes with loaded restraint, referring no longer to the opinions of "the director" but to "Mr. Sternberg . . . I beg the gentleman's pardon, Mr. von Sternberg."

Whatever one's sympathies, whether with Sternberg or his actors, there is no doubt about the direction in which we are being headed. Laughton delivers a dauntingly long speech from the scene he was experiencing such trouble with before. It is undoubtedly one of the finest things he had done on film, and neither Bogarde nor Williams makes any bones about it. Williams again: "Charles was a genius, but a child. He had a marvellous instinct for acting, he had humour and humility, but instead of relying on that he tried to rationalise . . . He wanted constant reassurance . . . He needed sun, sun, and

all he got from the director was frost, frost."

One can appreciate Laughton's difficulties. His script was evidently inexpert, pock-marked with intractable phrases like "stuffed, puffed up bully." The role of Claudius was full of those sado-masochistic overtones upon which Laughton based some of his most penetratingly human characterisations (Bligh, Javert, Moulton-Barrett), but which notoriously caused him anguish to play. Certainly there are moments of hammy degradation in *I, Claudius* which prove that he was only intermittently in command of the role and despaired of the fact. He made irrelevant demands upon himself, the more so now that he had established himself as a great film actor. *I, Claudius* followed a soul-searching series of failures with the Old Vic, and preceded Laughton's decision to become his own producer. In two respects he was ahead of his time. His approach to character anticipated today's Theatre of Cruelty. He was supremely a Method actor. In this last respect it is safe to say that he was temperamentally opposed to all that one knows of Sternberg's precise and autocratic methods. It could never have worked out, and one sees only too clearly why Williams refers to Merle Oberon's car crash as "a godsend."

There remains Sternberg's contribution, and here it becomes harder to pass any judgment that can be regarded as really valid. Too much of the material is a puzzle. For instance, in spite of the fact that Sternberg had Georges Périnal as his cameraman, there seems little that is distinguished about the film visually. Indeed it is more often than not uncharacteristic. Several of the scenes are shot in an uninventive, even awkward manner, with strangely little deployment of background, considering the magnificent palace interiors. The exteriors are variable. A sequence set outside Claudius's farm has Robert Newton approaching the camera from what looks like a badly painted backcloth. On the other hand Claudius's doctor emerges from a house that is lit and decorated in the recognisable Sternberg style.

There is other evidence that Sternberg was suffering from the disadvantages of working outside Hollywood. Messalina is seen wandering sexily along a corridor, toying with a gauze scarf and ogling Claudius. Given the advantage of Dietrich's exoticism this might have achieved an acceptable level of extravagant absurdity. As it is, Merle Oberon has all the panache of a wayward debutante. The extras are for the most part an embarrassing and peculiarly Mayfairish motley of huffers and puffers; the Vestal Virgins (designer John Armstrong is amusingly tart about them) are right out of DeMille; and even Robert Newton is reduced at one point to exiting with a sidelong, lingering leer. Emyln Williams has some good, clean, kinky fun with Caligula, wielding whips and shiny swords with languid relish, or announcing that his rebirth as a god is proving a long and painful process. Obviously, though, both he and Flora Robson—assiduously tottering and snarling as the ninety-year-old Livia—are fighting a grim battle with their dialogue.

But it would be grossly unfair to attempt any further estimate along these lines. Reshooting, re-editing, polishing, scoring, all might have made a vital difference and turned *I, Claudius* into the master-work Sternberg predicted. As it is, it remains a tantalising fragment whose place in film history has now been most movingly re-established by people who abundantly care.

PETER JOHN DYER

LAUGHTON AS CLAUDIUS.



FILM CLIPS

BY FAR THE MOST CHEERING thing about Milos Forman's films, I find, is the one thing one is not really supposed to say: that amid so much from east Europe which is desperately well-meaning, admirably acted, stylishly set and in every way eminently respectable, *Peter and Pavla* and *A Blonde in Love* are almost the only films to which one can react directly and immediately; that are modern cinema rather than in one way or another exhibits for the film museum. And though we talk dutifully in generalities, seeing hopeful prospects for a revival in Czechoslovakia or sadly noting a decline in Poland, Forman's films underline again the artificiality of such considerations: they are before anything else, what all worthwhile films must finally be, the evident product of one man's mind, one man's quirkily individual sensibility. They represent no movement, no trend; they represent only themselves.

Milos Forman personally is just what one might expect from his films: gentle, amiable, incorrigibly cheerful; a thoughtful, quizzical head set comfortably on a rugger-player's body. His career in films has been relatively short. Having fun with amateur dramatics at school decided him that he would like to become a stage director, but he could convince no one else that this was a good idea, so when he left school he enrolled in the film school as a trainee writer (his favourite films at the time were *Monsieur Verdoux* and *Great Expectations*).

Afterwards, in the intervals of making a living as a radio commentator, he wrote a number of film scripts, one of which, *Leave It To Me*, actually achieved production, directed by Martin Frič. Then he did a stint on *Magic Lantern*, as one of the four deviser-directors, and had another stab at the cinema with an original film script, *Little Dogs* (a Czech name for teenagers). This was directed, very sympathetically he says, by an old friend of his, Ivo Novak, but, "when I saw the finished film it just wasn't what I wrote—it had become someone else's film." In other words, the writer's eternal hankering to direct was upon him.

Easier said than done in Czechoslovakia, not only for all the usual reasons, but also because there are more than enough directors around who have trained as directors at film school, without encouraging people who have trained as writers or cameramen or anything else. Still, Forman bought a

16mm. German camera and began shooting for himself. He took as his subject a series of theatrical auditions for girl singers and performers, and shot a lot of material just showing what they did, their reactions to the event, the backstage scene and so on, then went back to the production company and showed them what he had got.

They liked it so much they gave him the money to complete the film and have it blown up to 35mm. The resulting 45-minute film, *Audition*, was then combined with another 45-minute film by Forman, *If It Wasn't for Music*, to make a two-part feature contrasting the jazz-directed aspirations of the young singers with the proselytising passion of their elders for playing in brass bands. It had enough success to persuade the producers that Forman should be given a chance to write and direct a feature film; the result was *Peter and Pavla*, and the rest is already film history.

Forman seems happy with the way he came into films, even though making the switch from writing to direction was something of a battle. "I don't really think it is good to want to be a director right from the start, so that you decide to be a director, train for it at film school, and then go out and direct. That's rather like wanting to be director of a factory without knowing or caring what the factory produces. The beginning of all good film-making is having something to say; once you know what that is, the rest follows. But it is not always easy to know at once whether you have anything to say which is worth saying, or just exactly how you want to say it. Writing is as good a way as any of finding out, and I think probably the best way to become a director. It's a pity that in the past in Czechoslovakia the categories have been rather too rigidly defined—you were trained for a particular job, then expected to do that and nothing else. Now things are changing, and several other young writers have become directors, like Pavel Juracek of *Joseph K*."

What precisely he wanted to say in his own films, and what he does say now that he has the chance, is more difficult to capsule. It would be hard to think of films less didactic in intention and therefore less susceptible to pat formulation of the director's philosophy. Certainly there is a lot in them that is highly personal: for instance, the fact that both Forman's own

parents died when he was about six cannot be totally irrelevant to the important part played in his films by the parent-child relationship.

"Maybe it is partly an attempt on my part to reconstruct in my mind what it would have been like to be a teenager with parents. But I hope it is not only what it would have been like, but what it *is* like. For the relationship between a child and his parents is the classic example of something which has always fascinated me: the tensions and conflicts between people of good will. I suppose you can make drama of a sort out of conflicts between the good and the evil, but it is not very interesting, and it is not very real. Did you ever meet anyone who was evil, or thought he was evil? I never did. Everybody believes himself to be acting for the best, and all the most important and immediate conflicts in life are between different, equally well-intentioned people's conceptions of what the best is.

"This is true historically and politically: a Nazi, for instance, who is shown as cynical, insincere and a 100 per cent. monster of evil is neither dramatically interesting nor very believable. Much more interesting is the Nazi who sincerely believes, as I am sure most of them did, that he is acting for the best and that whatever monstrous things he may do are not evil but merely necessary in order that the best shall come about. In the same way, what is interesting and true in a personal relationship—parents, lovers, what you like—is not the head-on collision of people who cannot communicate and totally misunderstand each other, but the little conflicts of people who basically understand each other very well, who like or even love each other, but nevertheless go on acting according to their own different ideas of what is best for everybody. In just the most simple, basic situation—a mother, a father, a boy, a girl—there is endless material, endless variety."

Like Olmi, a director whose work he greatly admires, Forman evidently believes, not sentimentally but as an observable truth, in the general goodness of human beings. Also that things at their saddest are also funny and things at their funniest are also sad. A transition like that towards the end of *A Blonde in Love*, when a near-slapstick scene of father, mother and son trying to share one too-narrow bed is instantly brought into focus by a shot of the girl listening and weeping outside the bedroom door, and then further by a boldly elliptical cut to the reactions of the girl's best friend to her (unheard) account of the incident, clearly demonstrates that Forman not only has something fresh and original to say about people, but complete technical mastery in the saying of it. Next on his schedule (probably) is a co-production about two young Czechs' experience of the English in England. If we are to see ourselves as others see us, we could hardly ask for a more sympathetic or clear-eyed witness.

MILOS FORMAN.



IT IS ALARMING, OFTEN, how the great names of the past turn out without our realising it to be no names at all for the present. Look at Preston Sturges, for instance, who was one of the greats of my childhood, and who stands up completely today as one of the cinema's biggest comic talents. At least, he certainly did so for those who came along to the National Film Theatre during the Sturges season in 1965, but they were surprisingly few, simply, I suppose, because to the vast majority of the N.F.T. audience the name

meant little or nothing. A director whose films have been unavailable for some years and who has not happened to be rediscovered by French critics is in a difficult enough position, but what about a producer? What about, say, Val Lewton?

Lewton was another great name in my childhood—for the in principle rather dubious reason that he was held to have brought dignity and intelligence to the horror film, and thereby restored the flagging faith of critics in the possibility of achieving excellence within the commercial framework of Hollywood. But Lewton died back in 1951, his films mostly vanished from view in the early 1950s, and just the name remains; hardly even that anymore. How, I wondered, would his films look now? When we saw a recent return to horror by an ex-alumnus of his, Robert Wise's *The Haunting*, what we liked least about it was precisely its evident determination to bring dignity and intelligence to the genre, rather as though making a horror film was in itself a somewhat dubious act which must be atoned for in advance.

Would Lewton's own films now look the same? Interestingly enough, the chance has recently been offered to find out: four of the best have been reissued and are making their way slowly round the outer ring of London re-run cinemas. And it is immensely comforting to find, for once, that reputation has not led us astray; they still are quite remarkably good. Sadly, the selection offered does not include one of my own favourites, Jacques Tourneur's *I Walked with a Zombie* (a sort of voodoo-infested Caribbean *Jane Eyre*), or *Bedlam*, a Karloff vehicle of 1946 which ended Lewton's horror-cycle with such a bang that it never got shown in sensitive, susceptible Britain. But still, *The Cat People* and *Leopard Man* (both Jacques Tourneur), *The Body Snatchers* (Robert Wise) and *Isle of the Dead* (Mark Robson) are enough of a bonus to keep us happy for the moment.

It is true, I think, of all of them that they work best in big scenes rather than as integrated wholes—just as many musicals scramble briskly and with as little nonsense as possible from one number to the next. The parts one remembered from last time remain still the most memorable: the extraordinary sequence in *Cat People* in which the Cat stalks her prey in a darkened swimming pool at night, with only the lapping of the water, the breathing of the cat and perhaps (or was it?) a faint shadowy something along the far wall. Or the great series of set-pieces at the end of *The Body Snatchers* in which Boris Karloff disposes of Bela Lugosi, Henry Daniell disposes of Boris Karloff, and then Karloff's vengeful spirit, or Daniell's guilt-torn conscience, finishes the tally of destruction. Or the final spurt of *Isle of the Dead*, an exceptionally slow-moving, "psychological" horror story, in which the cataleptic woman who has been buried alive (but of course!) escapes from her coffin, raving mad, and lurks muttering and moaning in the burial chamber. Or the running to earth of the "Leopard Man" killer in a procession of hooded *penetentes*.

All these scenes are as powerful as they ever were (and only one of them, incidentally, really involves anything supernatural). Some of the lesser performers may look pretty dated now—though not, of course, such old stalwarts as Karloff, Lugosi and Daniell. But the scripting, the art direction and, particularly remarkable, the sound recording (a lot of the best effects in Lewton's films are created by letting us half-hear what we cannot see at all), are all



VAL LEWTON'S "BEDLAM".

completely undated. As for the direction, Tourneur, Robson and Wise have seldom if ever done better work than they did under Lewton, even though Robson and Wise were then beginners and Tourneur had previously done nothing of note.

Clearly this is a case of that mysterious and problematic animal, the producer-auteur who prints his taste and his personality on his films, whoever happens to direct them. What we need now is a complete cycle featuring such rarities as *The Curse of the Cat People* (better, I am told, than *The Cat People*), the Maupassant adaptation *Mademoiselle Fifi* and the teenage problem drama *Youth Runs Wild*. Since Lewton pro-

duced only fourteen films altogether, it should not be impossible in principle, but in practice . . . Well, anyway, here's hoping.

THERE ARE NOT SO MANY directors of genius around that we can afford to waste one, though you wouldn't think so considering the years which separate the films of Dreyer, for instance, or the long inactivity of Sternberg. For quite different, political reasons (mainly the Nazi propaganda reputation achieved by *Triumph of the Will*) Leni Riefenstahl has been out of film-making for twenty years. Now she has at last been able to shoot a new film, which she is now

BORIS KARLOFF IN "ISLE OF THE DEAD".



editing, a colour documentary about the life of the Nuba tribe of the Sudan on the eve of the education and assimilation which threaten to destroy their traditional society for ever. In Munich recently I was able at last to meet the legendary Miss Riefenstahl, to see some of the materials on which she is working at present (which look fabulous), and to talk to her about her extraordinary career. So, a few notes on how she sees it all.

About *Triumph of the Will*. "Shortly after he came to power Hitler called me to see him and explained that he wanted a film about a Party Congress, and wanted me to make it. My first reaction was to say that I did not know anything about the way such a thing worked or the organisation of the Party, so that I would obviously photograph all the wrong things and please nobody—even supposing that I could make a documentary, which I had never yet done. Hitler said that this was exactly why he wanted me to do it: because anyone who knew all about the relative importance of the various people and groups and so on, might make a film that would be pedantically accurate, but this was not what he wanted. He wanted a film showing the congress through a non-expert eye, selecting just what was most artistically satisfying—in terms of spectacle, I suppose you might say. He wanted a film which would move, appeal to, impress an audience which was not necessarily interested in politics.

"I said that surely I would come up against a lot of opposition from within the Party this way, and he agreed, but said he would protect me from it and I should make the film entirely without interference. I didn't have time that year to prepare the shooting, as the congress was only two or three weeks away, but I made a short reportage of it, *Victory of Faith*, just to get the feel of it.

"Then I started preparing for the next year. Hitler kept his word about no interference; he did not even try to interfere except once. It was to do with the Wehrmacht. They didn't look particularly impressive, and anyway it happened to rain as they were passing in the parade, so I didn't use any footage of them in the finished film. Word of this somehow got back, and Hitler summoned me to tell me that this would cause trouble. Couldn't I possibly put them in? No, I said, the material was bad and it would look wrong. Couldn't I then, he suggested, add a prologue about the history of the Wehrmacht, to satisfy them? I had devised this beautiful slow opening with the plane coming through the clouds, and I thought anything else would kill the film, so I said no. 'Well, Leni,' said Hitler, 'do what you like; I did promise you. But I warn you, I can't prevent there from being trouble.' I didn't like the sound of that, but all the same I wasn't going to spoil my film for anybody, so there isn't a single shot of the Wehrmacht in the whole film.

"Of course there was a lot of trouble about it—Goebbels hated me anyway, which didn't help—but in the end Hitler suggested that to smooth things over I should agree to do a film specially about the Wehrmacht, and this I did, on the understanding that it should be my last political film—which was agreed to.



LENI RIEFENSTAHL AT WORK ON "TIEFLAND", HER LAST COMPLETED FILM.

I shot the film, a short called *Day of Freedom*, in a couple of days, and then everyone was happy, especially me, because it turned out very well. It seems to have disappeared entirely, which is a great pity, because I think that as a piece of sheer tight, dynamic editing it is perhaps the best thing I ever did."

About *Penthesilea*: "That is really the greatest disappointment of my whole career. Ever since *The Blue Light* I had dreamed of filming Kleist's tragedy, partly as an actress—it was a part I desperately wanted to play—but mainly as a director. But I got sidetracked, first by *Triumph of the Will*, then by the *Olympiad*, and when I finally managed to get it all set up in 1939 the war came and it had to be suspended, for good. I had—I have—it all in my head, though. As far as I know no one has ever really tried to film a great poetic text straight. I mean, that is, to make a film in which the claims of both film and poetry are fully respected. Olivier's Shakespeare films I think are very disappointing because he vacillates, sacrificing first one, then the other—now a bit of Shakespeare, now a bit of cinema, now a bit of Shakespeare again. Orson Welles draws marvellous pictures in the margin of Shakespeare, but his films are like operas or ballets suggested by Shakespeare, not Shakespeare himself.

"To me it seems all a matter of relative intensities. Any poetic text progresses in a sort of wave motion, like an alternating current of electricity: it rises to the highest pitch of poetic intensity perhaps just for a line or two, or at most a speech, then it falls away, then rises again. Equally a film moves in the same way visually: you cannot surfeit an audience with beauty and splendour, so you intensify the visual expressiveness of a sequence to a sort of peak, then let it die away to rise again. The thing to do is to

chart these two wave motions and see that they work in an inverse ratio one to another. This is one of the things that the sound film in the full sense of the term should be about; rhythm is at the basis of everything.

"I intended to stage *Penthesilea* in natural surroundings but using them in an entirely non-realistic way. Some of the visuals would be very detailed—exquisitely formal, composed in the spirit of ancient friezes and brooded over by a giant, coldly beautiful moon or a vast burning sun, five times larger than life. But as the poetic intensity of the text increased, so the visual intensity would diminish until everything was reduced to perhaps just two pure profiles outlined in silver as the greatest lines were spoken. It would have been my masterpiece, the crown of my career . . ."

But of course it came to nothing, like so many of her post-war projects—*The Red Devil*, a modern-dress *Penthesilea* on skis; *Voltaire and Frederick*, to be written by Cocteau and with both parts played by him; *Black Cargo*, a documentary about slavery which was actually begun and stopped when Miss Riefenstahl was injured in a motor accident; a balletic remake of *The Blue Light* along the lines of *The Red Shoes*. It is only now, twenty years after the shooting of her last film, *Tiefland* (finally edited and released in 1954), that she is really back at work.

THE COINCIDENCE OF Iris Barry's new rewritten book on Griffith and the Hammer remake of *One Million B.C.* reminds me that a little while back I did make some effort to sort out the mystery surrounding Griffith's participation, if any, in the original version of the film. This was said on the credits to be the work of Hal Roach, who also produced, but I have seen it suggested in print that in fact Griffith directed most or all of it (the most circumstantial version is that he left in a huff when it was decided to dub in prehistoric gibberish instead of his own highly literary text). Miss Barry simply records that he was taken on as producer, "probably for the publicity value of his name," but finally received no credit.

I asked Hal Roach, which seemed the obvious thing to do, and his version is this. Griffith was an old friend, and at this time (1939) was in a particularly dispirited state, having finally given up all attempts at a comeback. Roach asked him to work as associate producer on the film, partly to have the advantage of his undoubted skills as an organiser, but mainly in the hope of cheering him up and perhaps leading him on to something else. As far as Roach could remember there was never any question of his having a credit on the film; he certainly did not direct any of the principal scenes, as they were shot out on location while Griffith stayed back at the studio and was engaged almost entirely on organising and to some extent devising the process material with the prehistoric monsters. This he did superlatively well, but at the end of shooting he went back into retirement and gave up films altogether. So now we know.

ARKADIN

BOOK REVIEWS

HITCHCOCK'S FILMS, by Robin Wood. Illustrated. (A. Zwemmer, 10s. 6d.) **THE FILMS OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK**, by George Perry. Illustrated. (Dutton Vista, 10s. 6d.)

THE FILM PUBLISHING event of 1966 must be Truffaut on Hitchcock. Meanwhile, there's an eccentric but not unappetising hors d'oeuvre in the form of Robin Wood's *Hitchcock's Films*. From Truffaut we expect everything, including perhaps the definitive explanation of what the French see in *Rich and Strange*. From Mr. Wood we get only latter-day Hitchcock, with analyses of the last five films (*Vertigo* to *Marnie*), chapters on *Strangers on a Train* and *Rear Window*, and only the briefest references to anything else. "One day, perhaps, we shall rediscover Hitchcock's British films and do them justice," says Mr. Wood, "but who wants the leafbud when the rose has opened?" The new critics' loftiness about British Hitchcock is very odd. I can't help feeling that, having taken the position that American Hitchcock is immeasurably superior, they don't really want even to tackle the problem of writing about the British films. It could be embarrassing to like them too much; and denigratory of the Master to like them too little.

Mr. Wood, anyhow, takes his stand firmly on the "unbroken chain of masterpieces" represented by the last five films. He's at his best, I think, on *Strangers on a Train* and on *Vertigo*, which he regards as "Hitchcock's masterpiece to date" (though *Rear Window* is "perhaps the first of Hitchcock's films to which the term masterpiece can reasonably be applied"). Brave, cantankerous words: however much one may disagree with the *Vertigo* assessment, there's a hypnotic fascination in the case Mr. Wood puts up for this hypnotic film. The chapter on *North by Northwest* is schoolmasterly, and suffers from Mr. Wood's technique of writing from a position of such total involvement that he never bothers to remind us about bits of plot that don't interest him. (This reaches a point where he can discuss *Psycho* at length without any reference to what is surely the most terrifying of all its virtuoso effects—the murder of the detective.) It's the section on *Marnie*, however, which is the most obviously strained.

He complains that we have all missed the point about such things as the painted ship backcloth at the end of the street set, the zoom lens shots when Marnie's hand hovers over the money in the safe, and the obvious back-projection in the riding sequences. The back-projection gives "a dreamlike quality to the ride, but no sense of genuine release"; the zoom lens is "the most direct way of conveying this simultaneous attraction-repulsion"; the "false, painted set is a magnificent inspiration." But the trouble with these devices, to my mind, is that they simply don't work on the screen in the way they are coaxed into working in Mr. Wood's analysis. Far from finding the zoom lens shot 'direct,' I find it distracting: not a help to identification with Marnie, but a positive obstacle. And the back-projection is not 'dreamlike' (as, for instance, are the shots of the cars moving along real San Francisco streets in *Vertigo*) but just the old studio rocking-horse.

If Hitchcock were to tell us that this back-projection, say, was forced on him, it would make no difference. Earlier on, Mr. Wood makes a reference to *Suspicion*, and the disputed problem of the ending. (Hitchcock, it's known, wanted to follow the novel, in which the man *does* kill his wife, and was blocked by studio censorship.) Mr. Wood regards this as an irrelevancy. The point, as he sees it, is "the therapeutic theme, whereby a character is cured of some weakness or obsession by indulging it and living through the consequences" (see *Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, etc.), followed by "the extension of this 'therapy' to the spectator, by means of encouraging the audience to identify." In the case of *Suspicion* the argument seems to me very weak, gaily disregarding the fact that Hitchcock wanted to kill the wife rather than cure her, as well as the sheerly teasing element in the casting of Cary Grant.

This 'therapy' theme, however, is Mr. Wood's ball of thread through the Hitchcock labyrinth. It produces some arguable theories about the films, and some intriguing ones. It enables Mr. Wood, I think, to put up a stronger case for Hitchcock as moralist than Chabrol and Rohmer achieve with their Catholic sanctions. And his view of the essence of Hitchcock—"that ordered life depends on the rigorous and unnatural suppression of a powerfully seductive underworld of desire"—is a strong one.

It's achieved, however, at the cost of an almost total suppression of the cynical, joking side of the Master. Mr. Wood is clearly prepared to argue the hind leg off any critical donkey who doesn't see the point. But he can himself turn an almost wilfully deaf ear to the tone of voice in which a scene is played, or to the consistent and fascinating element of cruelty in the way Hitchcock treats his immaculate blonde heroines. He also produces some extraordinarily unhelpful literary comparisons. (*Vertigo* reminds him of Keats, but "we find in Hitchcock a far more secure and mature balance of sympathy and interest between the real world and the visionary . . . than Keats was capable of." Mrs. Brenner's discovery of the dead farmer in *The Birds* reminds him of the Marabar Cave episode in *A Passage to India*, but "the Hitchcock of recent years is a more rigorous artist than Forster.") And some of his explanations of events (see, for instance, the long passage about Melanie's solo expedition upstairs at the end of *The Birds*) take right off into the critical stratosphere.

All the same, any Hitchcock admirer will want to read Mr. Wood, if only for the pleasure of arguing with him. One point that he doesn't make in so many words, but which does intriguingly emerge, concerns Hitchcock's relation to his audience. He is, of course, the master showman. Yet in recent films we've had the plot explanation midway through *Vertigo* ("Our immediate reaction . . . is extreme disappointment"), and Marion's murder in *Psycho* ("an alienation effect so shattering that . . . we scarcely recover from it"). Of *The Birds*, Mr. Wood admits that, "At first it seemed to me a great disappointment . . . only at the fifth or sixth viewing did I feel that I was really seeing the film." Hitchcock's showmanship is less and less of the conventional kind: he is a one man refutation of the theory that to please the audience you must give them what they think they want.

Mr. Wood's book is very staidly illustrated. Mr. Perry's *The Films of Alfred Hitchcock* includes some much livelier stills from the recent films, as well as taking us right back to the beginning in the theatrical Twenties. The text is brief, biographical and orthodox. Readable enough, if no more than a beginner's guide to the beguiling world of Hitchcock scholarship.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CINEMA, by C. W. Ceram. Illustrated. (Thames and Hudson, 42s.)

THAMES AND HUDSON, who have always seemed such an admirable and reliable firm, have produced a singularly disappointing book in *Archaeology of the Cinema*. Perhaps it is a dreadful warning of what happens when a specialist publishes essays, without adequate advice, a specialisation outside his own field. In terms of production this is quite the most ambitious book in English on the pre-history of the cinema. Not that this is saying very much, for the only other work on this most engaging study published in Britain during the past half century has been Miss Olive Cook's *Movement in Two Dimensions*. Indeed, it is the very paucity of the literature which makes the publication of inadequate studies so maddening.

Mr. Ceram, whom the dust jacket describes as "the well-known author" and who elsewhere appears on the same wrapper as the author of a new *Picture History of Archaeology*, sets out "to make order out of a vast amount of material which has been accumulating for decades." He is not very successful. He produces no fact that is not already easily available; nor does he succeed in his intention of making logic and order out of the confused story of the century and more of experiment and invention that resulted at length in the cinematograph. Despite the will to do so, he shows himself unable to connect the technical evolution with the psychological urges and social situations which are bound up in the invention and exploitation of the film. Occasionally he suggests an interesting theme, but then shirks it ("The wholly new relationship between parents and children created by the cabinet photograph, and between individual and state created by the passport picture, is a matter that has not yet been adequately investigated by sociologists").

The book is not scholarly enough to be academically valuable (the author has made little use of the recent research of people like Brian Coe or the Barnes Brothers, or of the vast and practically unsifted resources of the Cinéma-thèque Française). Nor, despite the promise of the dust jacket ("Eastman, the poor millionaire . . .

The inventor who disappeared. . . Louis Lumière invents the cinema—in a single night . . . Pathé, the successful butcher's son . . .") is it entertaining enough to be popular. Mr. Ceram mentions the Thaumatrope and the lantern slide, he says, only because Sadoul (among others) has discussed them "at particular length . . . in his otherwise excellent *Histoire Générale*"—which is rather to overlook the significance of the Thaumatrope as the first experimental demonstration of the principle of the persistence of vision. Sadoul is again taken to task for his admiration of the enchanting Emile Reynaud. Mr. Ceram sees him more clearly as "a mediocre draughtsman . . . hardly an artist," even though he "deserves all our sympathy." And the French at large are blamed for their "patriotic" praise of Méliès' work "without defining his limits."

Still, we can look forward to the consolation that Thames and Hudson books are always so well produced and superbly illustrated. Or are they? *Archaeology of the Cinema* is printed in Germany; and though the greeny-grey of the text pages is a matter of taste, and the misprints are only occasionally positively misinformative, the 293 plates are less splendid than they appear at a first cursory glance. The lithographic process employed is very bad for detail, where detail is often of the first importance. "In the foreground is a French Polyorama Panoptique," says the caption to plate 72; but you are lucky if your copy shows more than an indistinguishable grey-black blur.

All the same the illustrations are the principal merit of the book. They have been chosen by Miss Olive Cook and captioned by someone (Miss Cook herself, perhaps?) who felt the need to redress some omissions and opinions of the main text. Mr. Ceram is graceful enough to admit the fact that: "These illustrations are far more than an addition to the book. They are an essential extension to the text, and also include cultural forerunners of the cinema which although not described in the text are included here to round off the technical history of the subject." The pictures are well-chosen and comprehensive. Occasionally, it is true, the selection seems capricious, notably in illustrating the chapters on photography and on the first films. While the author explicitly ends his study at 1897, the pictures, without dates or specific justifications, sporadically represent films up to the middle Twenties.

There is one particular illustration of singular mystery: plate 222 reproduces, without any explanatory caption, a manuscript note giving vague information about the Lumières' first British shows. For what it is worth, I seem to remember seeing this inscription about twelve years ago, on the back of a copy of the programme insert of the 1896 Lumière show at the Empire, Leicester Square. (This leaflet, which the caption-writer fails to point out as one of the rarest items of early cinema ephemera, is illustrated in plate 219.) If this is the origin of the manuscript, then I know who wrote it; and the information still does not solve the greater mystery of why it was thought worth reproducing here. But *Archaeology of the Cinema* will not bear much questioning on any score.

DAVID ROBINSON

DICTIONNAIRE DU CINEMA ET DE LA TELEVISION Volume I, by Maurice Bessy and Jean-Louis Chardans. Illustrated. (Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris/Rodney Book Service, £7.7s.)

IT LOOKS AS IF THE 1960s are the decade of the film dictionary: several small French volumes and two even larger Italian series have appeared, and at least two are in preparation over here. Now we have the first volume of Bessy and Chardans' vast and expensive work, in which 509 pages are devoted to the first three letters of the alphabet. Of course, one can't actually read it right through; one dips here and there and discovers much that is useful and original and a good deal which is, unhappily, both inaccurate and misleading. First impressions, then—the entries for French directors and players are more up-to-date than those for Britain and America. As with previous dictionaries, really famous names are likely to be better documented than those on the fringe whose credits are harder to come by (e.g., Floyd Crosby's entry is very incomplete and Corman's non-existent). The English spelling of names and titles is more accurate than in most French film literature, excepting a few howlers like "Helen in Pink Tights".

The actual coverage of the English film scene, however, is decidedly cranky and meagre. What aged historian decided that the masters of the *British* cinema of the 1930s were: "A. Hitchcock, P. Czinner, A. Korda, L. Biro, G. Périnal, E. Bergner, C. Veidt, V. Saville, F. Planer, P. L. Stein, M. Oberon, F. Kortner, K. Grune"? No film later than *Henry V* is mentioned in the entry, but one should perhaps be grateful for the few kind words about the British Film Institute's work "under the direction of Oliver Bell" (who died, alas, in 1952).

Those seeking up-to-date filmographies would be advised accordingly to look elsewhere in certain cases. Despite the inevitable

delays in publishing schedules, it was surely unnecessary that in a book copyrighted 1965 the Academy Awards list should end at 1962, and Ingmar Bergman's entry at *Through a Glass Darkly*. Jacques Brunius, that many-sided, influential figure in both France and Britain, does not appear at all, neither is the unexpected appearance of Emile Chautard, the melodrama and serial king, in Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* recorded in his entry. There are several even stranger additions: Judith Anderson's filmography includes *Psycho* (did they think she played poor old Mum?) and Michael Anderson's last credit is for his son's performance in *The Sundowners*.

My chief enjoyment derived from the lively layout, with stills, diagrams and drawings arranged in such a way that one is never quite certain how the succeeding pages will look, and from the authors' agreeable feeling for slightly bizarre subject headings and unexpected bits of research. Thus, we have a series of directors' famous sayings both revealing and otherwise (Buñuel: "I hate music in films"); a lavish survey of world-wide censorship regulations including a charming example of Disney cartoons before and after treatment; and a discourse on "Combats et Courses Equestres," taking in an analysis of how stunt men manage their falls. Here, rather than in the personality sections, lies the Dictionary's main appeal. One awaits Tome II with interest and some trepidation.

JOHN GILLET

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE BOGEY MAN. By Jonah Ruddy and Jonathan Hill. (Souvenir Press, 25s.)

A CHRISTMAS STORY. By Richard Burton. (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.)

CLASSICS OF THE FILM. Edited by Arthur Lennig. (Wisconsin Film Society Press, \$1.95.)

GARY COOPER, LE CAVALIER DE L'OUEST. By Lucienne Escoubé. (Editions du Cerf, Paris, 9.60 Fr.)

CZAR. By Thomas Wiseman. (Cassell, 30s.)

ROBERT FLAHERTY. By Henri Agel. (Editions Seghers, Paris.)

D. W. GRIFFITH. By Iris Barry. (Museum of Modern Art, New York. \$6.95/W. H. Allen, 55s.)

INTERNATIONAL FILM GUIDE. Edited by Peter Cowie. (Tantivy Press, 8s. 6d.)

SUR UN ART IGNORE. By Michel Mourlet. (La Table Ronde, Paris, 13.90 Fr.)

TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL EFFECTS CINEMATOGRAPHY. By Raymond Fielding. Focal Press, 55s.)

WHAT IS A FILM? By Roger Manvell. (Macdonald, 16s.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Sternberg and Stroheim

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—Apropos Elliott Stein's review of Josef von Sternberg's autobiography *Fun in a Chinese Laundry* in your Autumn issue, it is not true that Sternberg edited Stroheim's *The Wedding March* without the latter's agreement. In my forthcoming book on Sternberg (which Editions Seghers will bring out in January in Paris), I quote from a letter from Sternberg in which he rights this long-held misconception as follows:

"As I recall, both of us, von Stroheim and I, were under contract to Paramount, though he had finished *The Wedding March* and edited it long before I was assigned to cut it down to releasable length. We were friendly, he had repeatedly expressed admiration for my work. The company had told him to cut it down so that it could be released, and he said that he could not. Thereupon it was suggested that others handle it, and, until my name was mentioned, he objected strenuously. He, himself, showed me the film (to my recollection it included everything he intended to show). He asked me personally to take over the assignment, and I did so without any protest on his part. I told him precisely what I would shorten; we were friendly before, during and afterwards. I showed him the shortened version and he thanked me. Had he objected to anything, I would not only have restored the film to its original length but would have refused to have anything to do with it. I am explicit about this for it seems to be generally thought that I edited his work without his O.K., which is something I would not have done under any circumstances . . . I had been strongly impressed with his earlier *Greed* . . . I know nothing about the division of the film into

two parts. I never saw the film again and how it was finally shown is unknown to me."

The original screenplay by Stroheim, which I have, runs to 192 pages, of which the first 82 constitute the released version of the film, the so-called first part. The script is substantially the same as this version in every important respect. The only shortening done was the elimination of a 5-page prologue and two pages of persiflage between the maids and lackeys of the Wildeliebe-Rauffenberg ménage on the morning of Corpus Christi when the story proper starts; the visit by the parents of the Prince to old Schweizer's home to discuss the possible marriage of their children; and a fight between Schani and the Prince during a rendezvous of the Prince with Mitzi. That's all. Nothing else is missing and these scenes are expendable in the most salutary sense of the word, adding nothing to the main story-line.

In short, not only did Sternberg not botch *The Wedding March*, he made of the material at his disposal for the part that Paramount chose to release as the first part a smoothly flowing continuity, in which the ambiance of the milieu, the veracity of the characterisations, and the bitter-sweet mood of the love story (including the glints of wit and irony) were all retained. It was, indeed, this version which caused Erwin Piscator to say when he first saw it in New York in 1940: "It is the film equivalent of a novel by Balzac."

What doubtless irritated von Stroheim was the loss of the second part of the film, but that was Pat Powers' fault, the producer who halted shooting at the halfway point of this part, and Paramount's fault, for not backing up von Stroheim. It is certainly not Sternberg's fault.

Why, if Stroheim really felt that even Part One was mutilated in Sternberg's editing, did he personally supervise the transfer of the musical soundtrack from disc to film for Sternberg's edited version? Why did he not publicly disown the film as he did in the case of *Greed*? He was always very vocal about what others had done to his work, and with good reason where *Foolish Wives* and *Greed* were concerned, not to mention *The Merry Go Round*, *Queen Kelly* and *Walking Down Broadway*.

I once asked Stroheim what his opinion was of Sternberg and he replied, "A very intelligent man!"

Perhaps one day the full history of the cinema will be written—only then will the whole truth be known. Meanwhile, we can only fill in the gaps, where the missing facts are known.

Yours faithfully,

HERMAN G. WEINBERG

New York, 23.

A John Ford Footnote

SIR,—Just to set the record straight:

Recently, while thumbing through some past issues of SIGHT AND SOUND, I happened upon an item in the "In the Picture" column of the Summer 1961 issue which needs correction. Titled 'Ford Omnibus' and attributed to John Russell Taylor, it dealt with an episode in the *Wagon Train* television series which was directed by Ford and featured many Ford stalwarts aside from the series star at that time, the late Ward Bond, a veteran of many Ford films.

Within the article, the statement was made that this was "Ford's only venture into television so far." This is incorrect and I apologise for not catching this error four years sooner. Nevertheless, if it's not too late, Ford preceded this venture by a shorter-running (30-minute) one about five years before, made for an American TV show which may never have been seen in England, the short-lived *Director's Playhouse*. I cannot recall the name of the episode, but it featured John Wayne, Vera Miles, Ward Bond, Pat Wayne and Ken Curtis, all of whom were also in the cast of Ford's *The Searchers*, released about the same time in movie theatres throughout the nation. The story, likewise "characteristic in its unashamed corniness," to quote Taylor's description of the *Wagon Train* episode, dealt with a baseball coach whose team was headed for the major leagues for the first time in its history and who had been involved in some baseball scandal years before. (Bond played the coach.) Wayne played a highly-esteemed sports writer, all set to expose the coach when he is persuaded to act otherwise by the coach's daughter (Miss Miles).

Baseball, incidentally, was the subject of a later Ford TV venture: *Flashing Spikes*, presented in September 1962 by "Fred Astaire's Alcoa Premiere." It was an hour long and featured James Stewart as a scandalised ball player whose son's (Pat Wayne again) success in baseball redeems him in the public eye. Wayne played a 'cameo' as a master sergeant-umpire in a Marine Corps' baseball game. The cast also featured Lee Marvin, Jack Warden, Jack Pennick, Willis Bouchee, Ken Curtis, et. al. In short, it was a 'stock company' production.

Yours faithfully,

DAN BATES

Fort Worth, Texas.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

D. P. THIRLWELL (Business Manager)

FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

AGONY AND THE ECSTASY, THE (Fox) Carol Reed makes a glum entry into the epic field, with the indispensable Charlton Heston, unhorsed for once, as Michelangelo, and Rex Harrison scoring all the points as Pope Julius. Readers' Digest history; high, wide and handsome exterior photography by Leon Shamroy. (Diane Cilento, Harry Andrews. DeLuxe Color, 70 mm.)

******ALPHAVILLE** (Cinnoisseur) Godard's 1984, in which Lemmy Caution goes as representative of our world to Alphaville, city of machines (which is also Paris), and destroys its cold, rational, computer mind. Dazzling transmutation of pulp fiction images into a film which is unnervingly beautiful, intelligent, funny and serious. (Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, Akim Tamiroff.)

***ANSWER TO VIOLENCE** (Contemporary) Jerzy Passendorfer's reconstruction (made in 1958) of the assassination of the S.S. commander of Warsaw in 1944. A little slow, but consistently sharp acting and Jerzy Lipman's black-and-white photography lend it the essential air of authenticity. (Bozena Korowska, Zbigniew Cyntus, Roman Klosowski, Tadeusz Lomnicki.)

****BATTLE OF THE BULGE** (Warner-Pathé) Straightforward account of the Germans' last major offensive of the Second World War. Lasting three hours but never boring, thanks to strong narrative, splendid locations, fine staging of tank battles, minimal dose of messages and heroics. (Henry Fonda, Robert Ryan, Robert Shaw; director, Ken Annakin. Technicolor, Ultra Panavision presented in Cinerama.)

*****BLONDE IN LOVE, A** (Contemporary) Czech factory girl falls tentatively for dance-band musician who doesn't want to be tied down. Very funny, wistful and endearing, and filmed with an eye so exact and watchful that there isn't a teenage cliché in the film. (Vladimir Pucholt, Hana Brejchova; director, Milos Forman.)

BORDERLINES (United Artists) What happens when reaction meets progress among the staff of an American mental hospital. Joan Crawford sports skintight outfit in black to teach her nurses judo, while Robert Stack deadpans his way through it all. Melodramatic enough to rival *Dr. Kildare*. (Polly Bergen, Janis Paige, Robert Vaughn; director, Hall Bartlett.)

******CHARULATA** (Amanda) Love in a summer garden; despair in a dark mansion. Satyajit Ray's delicate and superbly controlled study of a triangle in Victorian India. (Soumitra Chatterjee, Madhabi Mukherjee.) Reviewed.

***CINCINNATI KID, THE** (M-G-M) Intermittently engaging attempt to do for poker what *The Hustler* did for pool. Blighted by Ann-Margret's puffing seductress, but witty (Terry Southern), decorative (New Orleans in the Thirties), and with a splendid poker king in Edward G. Robinson. (Steve McQueen, Joan Blondell, Tuesday Weld; director, Norman Jewison. Metrocolor.)

****DEAR JOHN** (Miracle) The chronicle of a love affair, beautifully acted and photographed. Director Lars Magnus Lindgren handles his stream of consciousness technique with easy confidence, and for once a Swedish film about sex manages the ecstasy without the agony. (Jarl Kulle, Christina Schollin.) Reviewed.

EARLY BIRD, THE (Rank) Norman Wisdom as a milkman, messily saving his boss from a take-over bid. In colour, and with Wisdom's affection going to a horse instead of a girl; otherwise routine. (Edward Chapman, Jerry Desmonde; director, Robert Asher. Eastman Colour.)

FAMILY JEWELS, THE (Paramount) Jerry Lewis hits rock bottom with a story about a little orphan heiress asked to select one of her six

uncles as her new father. He scripts, directs, and acts most of the parts himself, without raising even a single laugh. (Donna Butterworth, Sebastian Cabot. Technicolor.)

FIFI LA PLUME (Cinnoisseur) Sluggish whimsy about a burglar who takes refuge in a circus, discovers he can fly, and is taken for an angel as he flies about doing good works. (Philippe Avron, Mireille Nègre; director, Albert Morisse.)

FOUR KINDS OF LOVE (Gala) Italian episode film, supposedly wickedly witty about sex, which provides three easy ways of boring yourself to death. Only Bolognini's contribution is mildly amusing, thanks mainly to a jolly performance by Lollobrigida. (Virna Lisi, Elke Sommer, Monica Vitti; directors, Dino Risi, Luigi Comencini, Franco Rossi, Mauro Bolognini.)

***GREAT RACE, THE** (Warner-Pathé) New York to Paris motor race, with upright Tony Curtis and conniving Jack Lemmon locked in rivalry all the way. Slapstick exuberant; décor appealing; Lemmon magnificently moustachioed. But there's almost three hours of it. (Natalie Wood, Keenan Wynn; director, Blake Edwards. Technicolor, Super-Panavision.) Reviewed.

HAREM HOLIDAY (M-G-M) It's the new, smooth Elvis Presley, roaming a Middle Eastern desert kingdom, singing desert ballads and getting tangled with slave-girls, rebels and whatnot. (Mary Ann Mobley, Fran Jeffries; director, Gene Nelson. Metrocolor.)

HEROES OF TELEMAR, THE (Rank) Anthony Mann's painstaking account of how Norwegian Resistance workers foiled the German effort to harness atomic fission. Prettily photographed, and the action is up to Mann standards, but the rest is laboured and conventional. (Kirk Douglas, Richard Harris, Ulla Jacobsson, Michael Redgrave. Technicolor, Panavision.)

***HOW TO BE LOVED** (Contemporary) Sympathetic but sometimes clumping Polish film about an actress, once ostracised as a wartime collaborator and now a national heroine in radio soap operas, agonisedly reviewing her life in flashback. (Barbara Kraftowna, Zbigniew Cybulski; director, Wojciech Has.)

I SAW WHAT YOU DID (Rank) Ingenious thriller about two teenage girls who accidentally contact a murderer while playing telephone games, and find themselves on his list for elimination. Quite well acted, but rather lumpily directed. (Joan Crawford, John Ireland, Andi Garrett; director, William Castle.)

KING RAT (BLC/Columbia) British and American prisoners-of-war eating dogs, rats, etc. in Changi Prison under the sardonic eye of master-fixer George Segal. A heavy and unlikeable film working beaverishly to be serious and ironic. (James Fox, Tom Courtenay, John Mills; director, Bryan Forbes.) Reviewed.

***LADY L** (M-G-M) The bizarre adventures of Louise, who begins life as a Parisian laundress and ends as an 80-year-old duchess telling of the men in her life, an anarchist and an aristocrat. Décor lavish, screenplay sometimes witty, but the inspiration flags. (Paul Newman, David Niven, Claude Dauphin, Cecil Parker. Eastman Colour, Panavision.) Reviewed.

*****LOTNA** (Contemporary) Andrzej Wajda's extraordinary tale of the Polish cavalry's despairing battles with German tanks in the early days of the Second World War. Bizarre, baroque, and often hauntingly beautiful. (Jerzy Pichelski, Adam Pawlikowski, Jerzy Moes. Agfacolor.) Reviewed.

***MONSIEUR HULOT'S HOLIDAY** (Screen-space) Revival of Jacques Tati's seaside comedy for those who delight in his special brand of humour. (Jacques Tati, Nathalie Pascaud.)

MONSIEUR VINCENT (Cinnoisseur) Revival of Maurice Cloche's dreary epic of the trials and tribulations of St. Vincent de Paul, saint in humility. Now dubbed, to make it an even less engaging proposition. (Pierre Fresnay, Aimé Clariond.)

***PEACH THIEF, THE** (Contemporary) Mournfully sensitive First World War romance between a Serbian prisoner-of-war and the wife of the camp commandant. Atmospherically directed, but loaded with naive messages about the new life which will—or won't—follow the war. (Nevena Kokanova, Rade Markovich; director, Vulo Radev.) Reviewed.

REWARD, THE (Fox) Gloomy goings-on during man hunt in Death Valley, turgidly directed by Serge (Sundays and Cybele) Bourguignon. Joe MacDonald's splendid location photography is

worth a look, though. (Max von Sydow, Gilbert Roland, Yvette Mimieux. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

SANDS OF THE KALAHARI (Paramount) The Zulu team in the desert again. Cy Endfield directs six characters in search of survival, stranded in the midst of a baboon colony in the South African desert. Everyone mouths lines about the universal significance of it all, while the baboons look on in amazement. (Stanley Baker, Stuart Whitman, Susannah York, Harry Andrews. Technicolor, Panavision.)

SECRET OF MY SUCCESS, THE (M-G-M) Shirley Jones (quite funny), Stella Stevens and Honor Blackman as the three lovely but variously wicked ladies who gull policeman James Booth into overlooking the skeletons in their cupboards. Lame comedy with moments. (Lionel Jeffries, Amy Dolby; director, Andrew L. Stone. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

SEVEN FACES OF DR. LAO (M-G-M) Fanciful allegory set in small American town, which finally drowns in its own syrup. Tony Randall as the title's wily old Chinaman plus six other elaborate impersonations makes the homely philosophising almost bearable. (Barbara Eden, John Ericson; director, George Pal. Metrocolor.)

****SHAKESPEARE WALLAH** (Contemporary) Adventures of a touring Shakespeare company in India, gallantly struggling to keep abreast of the changing times. Very engaging subject, slightly pulled down by under-direction; Madhur Jaffrey is enchantingly acid as the outrageous Indian film star. (Felicity Kendal, Shashi Kapoor; director, James Ivory.)

SHIP OF FOOLS (BLC/Columbia) Stanley Kramer's all-star boatload of 1933. One problem to each character; acres of symbolic dialogue. Highly watchable performances from Oskar Werner (ship's doctor), Simone Signoret (ship's drug addict), Vivien Leigh (ship's divorcee) slightly brighten the screen's longest voyage home. (Lee Marvin, Jose Ferrer, Elizabeth Ashley.)

SLEEPING BEAUTY, THE (Romulus) Lavish wide screen version of Tchaikovsky's ballet, fussily decorated but splendidly danced. Balletomanes will find the Wicked Fairy unusually wicked; others may wilt at close-up view of ballet conventions and lack of rhythmic sense in the editing. (Alla Sizova, Yuri Solovoyov, Natalia Dudinskaya; directors, Konstantin Sergeyev, Appolinari Dudko. Sovcolor, 70 mm.)

SOUND OF MUSIC, THE (Fox) Julie Andrews in the second of her all-conquering governess roles, as the convent novice who converts an Austrian naval captain and his family into a singing troupe. Almost intolerably wholesome. (Christopher Plummer, Eleanor Parker; director, Robert Wise. DeLuxe Color, Todd-AO.)

***TOWN TAMER** (Paramount) Spirited old-style Western (ageing ex-marshal cleans up lawless town), beautifully played by veteran cast. Bruce Cabot outstanding as the bad man; not to mention Lyle Bettger, Richard Arlen, Lon Chaney. (Dana Andrews, Terry Moore; director, Lesley Selander. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

UP JUMPED A SWAGMAN (Warner-Pathé) Anything Dick Lester can do, Christopher Miles can do... not so well, on the evidence of this running, jumping and rarely standing still pop musical. Nice supporting performances from Donal Donnelly and Ronald Radd. (Frank Ifield, Annette Andre. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

VERY SPECIAL FAVOUR, A (Rank) Rock Hudson, irresistible to women, plots to subdue frigid psychoanalyst (Leslie Caron) by enrolling as one of her patients in yet another American sex comedy. This one has a screenplay by Stanley Shapiro and Nate Monaster bubbling over with dubious *doubles entendres*, transvestism, et al. (Charles Boyer, Dick Shawn, Larry Storch, Nita Talbot; director, Michael Gordon. Technicolor.)

****WAR LORD, THE** (Rank) Strikingly literate adaptation of Leslie Stevens' play *The Lovers*, a tale of conflict between love, duty and primitive superstition in 11th century Normandy. Intelligent direction by Franklin Schaffner, stunning colour photography by Russell Metty. (Charlton Heston, Richard Boone, Rosemary Forsyth. Technicolor, Panavision.)

WILD AFFAIR, A (BLC/British Lion) Nancy Kwan as a London typist tasting the dubious delights of *la dolce vita* at an office party before deciding that marriage is best after all. Miss Kwan's idea of provocation—as well as her dress designer's—has to be seen to be believed. (Terry-Thomas, Jimmy Logan; director, John Krish.)

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